

Erap impeachment trial resumes today

STORY
BELOW,
COLUMN 2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2001 ★★ 46 PAGES 4 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 25 P15

Pope calls for peace in the Middle East

POPE John Paul II on Monday called on all sides in the Middle East conflict to return to the path of dialogue, saying people of different cultures would have to live in mutual respect if they wanted peace in an age of migration and globalization.

The Pope told the faithful during a two-hour New Year's Day Mass in St. Peter's Square that

POPE/ A15

Bishops: Let's stop accusing each other

CATHOLIC bishops yesterday appealed for calm and urged opposing parties to stop blaming each other following the bombings that killed 15 people in Metro Manila.

"We appeal to all opposing parties to desist from trading accusations and recriminations, and to all our people to refrain from spreading unverified rumors and speculations, as these only add to the confusion and anxiety already gripping the nation," said Bishop Nestor Cariño, spokesperson of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).

The opposition has blamed the bombings on President Estrada while a son of his accused former President Fidel Ramos and former National Security Adviser Jose Almonte of orchestrating the bombings.

Despite the CBCP's call, the recriminations did not end.

Militant groups yesterday assailed presidential son Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito and National Security Adviser Alexander Aguirre for blaming the bombings on groups seeking the President's resignation.

"The Palace has this habit of putting the blame on all Mr. Estrada's foes. It has been quick to discharge the names of the usual suspects and

BISHOPS/ A7

Anti-crime group's witness tags military



THE DAWN of a New Year sneaks upon the landscape of the city still submerged in the smoke and revelry of the night before. EDWIN BACASMAS

Our source ready to talk on bombings —Vizconde

BY JEROME ANING
AND ARMAND NOCUM

A MINDANAO-BASED witness claims that a "military official" masterminded Saturday's wave of bombing attacks in Metro Manila, hatched the plan two to three weeks ago, and trained a team of convicts to carry it out, an anti-crime group said yesterday.

This developed as President Estrada's spokesperson Ernesto Maceda announced that the US government has formally offered to send "anti-terrorist" experts to help unmask the perpetrators of the bombing spree that killed 15 and injured around 90 others.

"We certainly welcome such an offer," Maceda said, as police investigators greeted the New Year apparently no closer to solving the Rizal Day bombings.

Interior Secretary Alfredo Lim took matters into his own hands and offered a P1-million reward from his department for any information "leading to the identification and arrest of the mastermind behind the bombings."

But as Maceda and other authorities sought to calm the public amid

ANTI-CRIME/ A7

Sci-fi guru: Wigs wave of future

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka—Wig-making could become really big business in the next century as people would soon be directly plugged into their computers.

This was the prediction of sci-fi guru Arthur C. Clarke who co-wrote the screenplay of Stanley Kubrick's movie "2001: A Space Odyssey" in 1964.

As 2001 finally dawned Monday, Clarke said the next 100 years would be

SCI-FI/ A15

PELUKA, PELUKA.
BINABARGAIN!



New Year's Eve revelry subdued But 'morning-after' figures show 19 dead nationwide

BY NORMAN BORDADORA

THE TRADITIONALLY raucous New Year's Eve revelry was noticeably subdued because the economic crisis compelled people to spend their money on food instead of on firecrackers, health officials

said yesterday.

The reduced purchasing power, coupled with the Department of Health's campaign against the use of dangerous firecrackers, resulted in a sharp drop in the number of revelry-related injuries from around 800 last year.

"Morning-after" figures that the DOH gathered from government hospitals nationwide showed only 243 cases of firecracker blast injuries, such as amputated fingers.

But reports from the field showed that many more were injured and at least 19 were killed. (See stories on

Pages A2 and A3.)

Among the dead were three Amerasian children and their mother who died in a fire that struck their house in Angeles City early yesterday and that was believed to have been set off by firecrackers.

NEW YEAR'S/ A15

'NO FEAR' Erap trial resumes today

BY MARTIN P. MARFIL
AND JULIET L. JAVELLANA

THE IMPEACHMENT trial resumes this afternoon with the prosecution saying that they are ready to prove that the P500 million placed in a Jose Velarde trust account is ill gotten.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Sen. Franklin Drilon said the bombings that killed 15 people in Metro Manila on Saturday would not deter them from pushing through with the trial.

"There is absolutely no effect. We will continue the hearings," Drilon

said. But he said he was concerned that the bombings could be a prelude to "something (bad). I think that is a common concern of people."

The defense panel also shared the view that the trial would proceed today as it prepared to counter the damage wrought to the President's case by the testimony of Equitable PCI Bank senior vice president Clarissa Ocampo on Dec. 22.

"I would like to believe that the bombings have no connection to the impeachment trial. I don't see any problem because I think there is no connection," said Raymond Parsifal "Archie" Fortun, one of the

defense lawyers.

Just like any Filipino, the defense team is interested in the truth, according to Fortun.

"We also want the truth to come out of this trial and that we will do until this is settled and voted upon by our senator-jurors," he said.

Ocampo had testified that Jose Velarde, who owns a P500-million account where a payment for a mansion came from, was none other than Mr. Estrada. The mansion was allegedly for one of the President's mistresses. The impeachment trial was adjourned on Dec. 22 right after

ERAP/ A6

Who has burden of proof in ill-gotten wealth cases?

BY RAUL J. PALABRICA

THE NATIONAL drama that is President Estrada's impeachment trial resumes its public engagement at 2 p.m. today.

It is the 13th day of the trial, and Clarissa Ocampo, the 13th witness of the prosecution, is expected to take up from where she left off in her direct testimony.

Unless the defense lawyers are able to stop her from testifying further, Ocampo may give more details about the P500-million bank account that the President allegedly opened at Equitable PCIBank un-

der the name Jose Velarde.

The prosecution claims that the P500 million constitutes ill-gotten or illegally acquired wealth because it is grossly disproportionate to the President's salary and other income.

The defense, on the other hand, questions the materiality of the deposit to the Articles of Impeachment and banks

on the fact that the money involved has yet to be proven as ill gotten.

Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. has ruled that the burden of proving that the P500 million is ill gotten rests with the prosecution. If

WHO/ A6

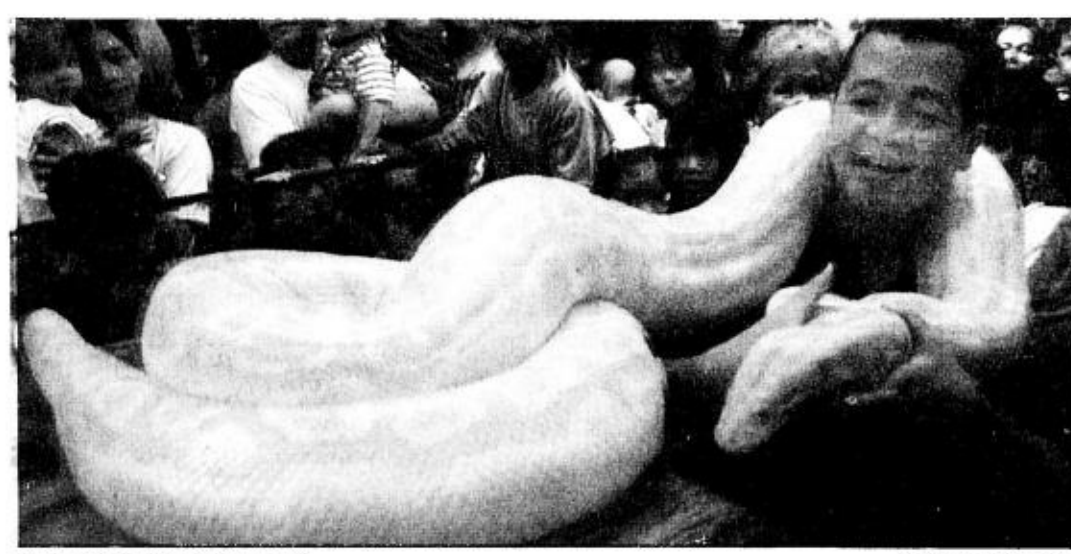
Top Boy Scout hopes to see pa Down Under

ANY Filipino Boy Scout would be proud to be chosen to represent his country at an Asia-Pacific jamboree in Australia, but this young man has a special reason of the heart for wanting to make the trip.

Robin William Jessup, 16, hopes to meet his Australian father, whom he last saw when he was 3 years old.

But this consistent honor student from Sorsogon has no idea of how he is going to find his dad, a man by the name of Rupert Jessup, when he gets to New South Wales, where the

TOP/ A15



YEAR OF THE SNAKE

Zoo owner Manny Tangco ushers in 2001 with the real thing, his slithery pet named Albino.

RANDY HORMILLOSA



AND father Rupert Jessup makes a family complete should outstanding student Robin Jessup find him. He's shown with his mother Emma and sister Emmalyn.

Second **FRONT PAGE**MABUTI
NAMAN AT
NATAKOT!

'Quiet' revelry in Metro...

BY JEROME ANING,
AGNES E. DONATO,
NELSON FLORES AND
CHRISTIAN V. ESGUERRA

NO one died and only 452 persons were injured in firecracker-related incidents in one of the quietest New Year celebrations in memory in Metro Manila.

Perhaps it was because of the economic crisis or the rash of bomb attacks the day before, but police insisted it was their information drives about the danger of firecrackers that brought down the number of injuries.

Senior Insp. Santos Ominga, of the Eastern Police District operations division, said the number of injured in his jurisdiction decreased by over 150 percent over last year.

He attributed the drop to the information campaigns launched by the police, both locally and nationally.

The Eastern District reported only 40 firecracker-related injuries—each in Marikina and Mandaluyong cities and eight in Pasig City.

The highest number of injuries was recorded in the Western Police District, with 223 injured taken to 16 hospitals.

Victims

More than half of the victims were taken to four big hospitals: 46 to the Dr. Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center in Sta. Cruz; 36 to the Gat Andres Bonifacio Memorial Medical Center in Tondo; and 22 each to the Philippine General Hospital, the Tondo Medical Center and

the Ospital ng Tondo.

Fourteen each were taken to the Mary Johnston Hospital and the Ospital ng Sampaloc, 12 to the Ospital ng Maynila, eight to the Chinese General Hospital, six to the Sto. Tomas University Hospital, five to the Metropolitan Hospital, four each to the Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital and the San Lazaro Hospital, two to the Mary Chiles Hospital, and one each to the Infant Jesus Hospital and Trinity Woman and Child Center.

Three of those taken to the Chinese General Hospital were hit by stray bullets. They were identified as Rodel Narciso, 17, who was hit in the left leg; Edwin Layno, 20, who was hit in the right leg, and Ulmido Dizon, 47, of Gulod, Novaliches, who was shot in the right thigh.

Four children were taken to the Manila Doctor's Hospital with *watusi* poisoning.

In northern Metro Manila, 57 persons, mostly children, were reported injured in New Year-related revelry.

Stray bullet

An 8-year-old girl identified only as Aira, of Caloocan City, was the lone reported victim of indiscriminate firing in the northern metropolis.

She was rushed to the Caloocan City General Hospital but was later transferred to another hospital and her whereabouts remain unknown.

The Malabon Municipal Hospital recorded the highest number of injured at 28, saying the victims started coming in as early as Dec. 27.

Among those more seriously injured was 8-year-old Joshua Abinasa, whose left hand and two

fingers in his right hand were mangled by a firecracker blast.

Late New Year morning, yet another young casualty was reported in Malabon. He was 10-year-old Marco Borabo of C. Perez Street, Barangay Tonsuya, who was collecting gunpowder from unexploded firecrackers when they suddenly exploded in his face.

Borabo suffered a deep cut in the right forehead and a bruised right eye.

Ten persons were taken to the Caloocan General Hospital, while five others were rushed to the Manila Central University Hospital at the height of the celebrations.

At least 13 persons each were rushed to the Valenzuela General Hospital and the Fatima Medical Center.

In southern Metro Manila, 93 persons were hurt, including two who were hit by stray bullets, police reported.

Drizzly night

SPO4 Rolando Cipriano, SPD Tactical Operations Center desk officer, said the number of injuries was the lowest recorded in the district in the past five years.

He attributed the low number of injuries to the government campaign against the use of firecrackers, as well as the weather which was damp and drizzly for most of the night.

Cipriano said Las Piñas reported the highest number of firecracker victims with 30, followed by Parañaque, 21; Pasay, 20; Muntinlupa, 14, and Makati with only eight. The municipalities of Pateros and Taguig reported zero casualty rates.

The victims of indiscriminate firing in the district were identified as Sandy Miskeros, 21, of Upper Bicutan, Taguig, and Lailani Nivera, 20, of Juan Luna Street, Pasay City. They were in their respective homes when struck by bullets.

Miskeros, who suffered a gunshot wound in the throat, is reportedly in critical condition at the Rizal Medical Center in Pasig City, while Nivera is at the Pasay City General Hospital with a gunshot wound in the right arm.

Police said they are still trying to determine who fired the guns that hit them.

In San Juan, hometown of President Estrada, no injuries were recorded and no incidents of indiscriminate firing of firearms were reported.

Town policemen tightened security in Barangay West Crame where Philippine National Police headquarters is located.

PNP chief Director General Pantilo Lacson had earlier ordered the ammunition issued to policemen counted to ensure that no one would fire their guns indiscriminately to greet the new year.

Despite Lacson's order, however, the six incidents of indiscriminate firing were reported, although it could not be ascertained if those responsible for the shootings were policemen.

WPD director Chief Supt. Avelino Razon Jr. said that even if for the first time in many years there were no victims of stray bullets in his jurisdiction, the service firearms of WPD policemen would still be tested at random to see if they were fired recently. *With Aleuin Papa*



NEW YEAR, NEW VICTIM: A girl, a victim of firecracker explosion, grimaces in pain as she receives emergency treatment at the East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City.

EDWIN BACASMAS



28 December 2000

AN URGENT LASALLIAN APPEAL

On 18 October 2000, we, the Lasallian Family, issued a call to action in response to the crisis gripping the nation. In light of the events that have transpired since, once again we feel we cannot keep silent in the face of the disheartening effects of the revelations in the Senate. This is the general sentiment of the people we work with, from all sectors across the nation. The crisis that divides us as a nation calls for immediate resolution, and it is in our desire to see the wounds of our nation healed that we make this appeal:

- **Mr. President, the situation has reached the point where nothing less than your resignation can heal the wounds inflicted on the nation and on the welfare of the numerous poor whom you vowed to serve.** For the good of our people, Mr. President, for the good of the poor whom you love – we appeal to you to consider voluntary resignation as an act of patriotism.
- **To the Cabinet members who are sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle: We appeal to you to witness to the values that your alma mater has tried to instill in you from your youth.** You owe it to the President to mirror to him the realities of this painful experience and to help him find an honorable way to leave office, even if it be at the cost of giving up your own positions.
- **To the honorable Senators: As you go about your sacred duties in fidelity to your oath of office, we enjoin you to remain steadfast in your adherence to truth, justice and the common good.** We pray that you will have the moral courage to rise above partisanship and pass judgment according to the dictates of your conscience, for the honor and glory of God and for the welfare of the nation.

We invite all of you, Mr. President, Cabinet members and honorable Senators, to discern in prayer what our God is asking of you at this crucial moment in the history of our nation. What you decide will have a long lasting effect on our nation's destiny. Be true to your conscience and trust that our God who calls on you to make such a difficult sacrifice will not abandon you in this, your hour of need. We are accompanying you in prayer, hopeful that you will respond to God's call to do what is right.

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Enrique Tayde

Dr. Carmelita Quebengco

Susan Estanislao

NEW YEAR'S DAY IN PROVINCES

... But deadly elsewhere

BY THE PDI BUREAUS

AT LEAST 19 persons were killed and hundreds of others were injured in firecracker explosions, shooting and stabbing incidents during the New Year's Eve revelry in the provinces.

Among the fatalities were three Amerasian children and their mother who died when a fire, believed to have been set off by firecrackers and sparklers, struck their house in Angeles City early yesterday.

More than 230 persons were hurt in firecracker-related and indiscriminate-firing incidents in Northern and Central Luzon.

Chief Supt. Roberto Calinisan, Central Luzon police director, identified those killed in the Angeles fire as Ray-Al Concepcion, 5; Jay-Lou de la Buena, 3; Angelo Garzon, 3 months; and their mother named only as Yolly. Investigators said the fire, which raged from midnight to dawn Monday, destroyed two other houses in Barangay Malabanan.

Dance party shooting

In Isabela, a woman was killed and three others were wounded when an Army sergeant fired his gun during a dance party in Barangay Calabab in Angadanan town, police said.

Killed was Milagros Palma, 21, while those wounded were Larry Talosig, Jenalyn de la Fuente and Luisa Barcan.

Relatives of one of the victims identified the suspect as Sgt. Lando Liban of the 5th Infantry Division.

Reports said Liban surrendered to Maj. Leonardo Gumaru, 5th ID provost marshal, at Camp Melchor de la Cruz in Gamu, Isabela.

Firecracker explosions resulted in injuries in Isabela, Pangasinan, Ilocos Norte, Baguio City, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Olongapo City, Tarlac, Bulacan and Bataan.

Parts of Cabanatuan City suffered a three-hour brownout when SPO1 Luis Vizconde fired his M-14 rifle and .45-cal. pistol at an electric transformer.

Calinisan recommended the summary dismissal of Vizconde, a member of the 302nd unit of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group. Vizconde is now in the custody of the regional CIDG.

Less serious cases

Supt. Emelito Sarmiento, Bulacan police director, said that although the number of firecracker explosion victims in the prov-

ince increased by 60 percent, this year's cases were less serious than last year's.

Dr. Noel Manaois, emergency room doctor at the Ilocos Region Medical Center in Dagupan City, said the number of those injured was expected to rise as more patients were being admitted to the hospital on Monday.

In Barangay Malued in Dagupan, Alfie Laroza, 13, and his friends were picking up firecracker leftovers when these exploded, causing a three-centimeter fracture in his skull.

At least three boys lost their hands due to firecracker explosions. The youngest recorded victim at the Ilocos Region Medical Center was Regine Villanueva, 2, whose toes were injured.

Southern Luzon

In Laguna, three persons were seriously injured and three were stabbed as they welcomed the New Year.

Christian Leanto, 19, of Calamba town lost both hands when a baby dynamite exploded, according to an attendant of J. P. Rizal District Hospital in Calamba.

Jay Santos of the Provincial Radio Communication Office also disclosed that John Roger Roque, 4, of San Pablo City was hit by a stray bullet.

The child is now out of danger, Santos said. In Lucena City, 11 persons were injured during the merrymaking.

Visayas

In the Visayas, eight people were killed and 160 others were injured, while a foiled grenade attack sent jitters to residents of a coastal village in Iloilo.

Two of the four deaths in Iloilo were killed in a vehicular accident, one was shot and another was stabbed.

Kevin Tobias and Nanette Ortega, both in their late 40s, were killed when the jeep they were riding in skidded off the road in Barangay Calampitau, Miag-ao, Iloilo.

Nozor Cacho, of Ajuy, Iloilo, was shot dead by an unidentified assailant about 11:30 p.m.

Romy Azucena, 30, of Barangay Karig-on in Buenavista, Guimaras, died at the West Visayas State University Hospital after he was stabbed in the belly.

A bomb squad recovered a grenade lobbed onto a street in Barangay Camangay in Leganes, Iloilo, and exploded it on an open field.

Witnesses said a certain Andy Demetillo, who remains at large, tossed the apple-type grenade, but it did not explode although its pin had been removed.

Don Jeff Selguerra, 14, of Mandurriao District, Iloilo City, lost all fingers in the left hand when the firecracker he was holding exploded.

In Negros Occidental, four persons were killed and 46 others were injured in firecracker blasts.

Luisa Nerio Villanueva, 45, of Barangay Guimbalaan, Silay City, was shot in the face with a 12-gauge homemade shotgun by her son Abelardo Villanueva Jr., 22, early Sunday.

When he realized that he had killed his mother, Abelardo shot himself, too. Police said the young man got angry when he saw his mother dancing with another man at a party.

Wennie Yasay, 18, and Reynaldo Belleza, 19 were killed past midnight yesterday when their motorcycle skidded on a slippery road in Barangay Malingin, Bago City.

In Cebu, 65 persons were treated for firecracker injuries and four others were injured in brawls, records from various hospitals showed.

Mindanao

At least six people, including a woman bus passenger and a pastor, were killed while several others were wounded in a series of violent incidents in Davao del Sur and Davao City.

Civilian volunteers of Barangay Zone 1 in Sta. Cruz town on Sunday shot it out with a group of fugitives, resulting to the death of the two militiamen and the wounding of two others.

Killed were Jonathan Apostol and Basilio Cudra.

The paramilitary unit clashed with the group of Fernando Hermosada, a former communist rebel who bolted jail, in Sitio Patulungan. Hermosada is wanted for murder and highway robbery in Sta. Cruz.

In Magsaysay town, a pastor was killed and two women were wounded when unidentified men fired at the Alliance Church in Barangay Bacungan.

Police identified the victim as Velasco Pelayo. Wounded were Rufina Pelayo and Conchita Daya.

Abdul Tarawe, a fisherman from Barangay Aplaya, Digos City, was nearly killed when he was hacked by a neighbor over an altercation.

Illegals find Naia strict on holidays

THEY probably thought that immigration check at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport would be lax during the holidays. They were wrong.

Six Chinese nationals, including four suspected prostitutes, were barred from leaving Manila yesterday while two Iranians were deported for carrying fake travel papers.

Jun Euk Park and his four female companions were stopped from boarding their flight for Venice on Sunday night after immigration officers found their Korean passports to be spurious. Park later admitted that they were Chinese.

Yesterday morning, another male Chinese, Cha Kung Bying, was held before his flight for China departed on suspicions that he was carrying a spuri-

ous Philippine passport.

Also at the weekend, Iranians Karim Deniero and Siavash Siayeghi, a boxer, were sent back to their country for carrying fake European passports.

"Some foreigners with fake travel documents often try to sneak in or out of the country during the holidays, thinking we'd be sleeping on our jobs. And often, they're proven wrong," immigration officer Rudy David said.

Park and the four Chinese women presented Korean passports at the immigration counter. On closer inspection, the passports' Philippine immigration stamps turned out to have been tampered with.

TJ Burgonio

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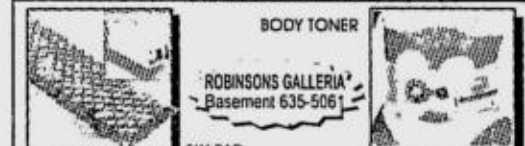
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Quake jolts Mindanao

MATI, Davao Oriental—A strong quake jolted the northern and southern parts of Mindanao shortly before 3 p.m. yesterday and people thought it was the end of the world on the first day of the third millennium.

No one was reported killed by the quake and aftershocks, which lasted about three minutes in all.

But thousands of residents rushed out of their homes and buildings, causing minor injuries to some. Cracks appeared in some buildings, glass windows were broken and appliances fell off their stands in this town, the area nearest the epicenter.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said the quake struck at 2:57 p.m., registering a magnitude of 6.6 at the Richter Scale at the epicenter at sea, 65 km southeast of Mati.

The quake hit the scales at Intensity 6 in Bislig, Surigao del Sur where a quake was also recorded a day earlier, at 3:51 p.m., with a magnitude of 5.1. That quake's epicenter was pinpointed at an area some 135 kilometers east of Tan-

dag, Surigao del Sur.

As it radiated out, the New Year's Day quake registered Intensity 5 in the cities of Davao, Butuan and General Santos; 4 in Kidapawan City; 3 in the cities of Cotabato, Surigao, Cagayan, Iligan and Cebu and the towns of Tagbilaran in Bohol and Palo, Leyte; and 2 in Dumaguete City.

Several aftershocks were also recorded by Philvolcs.

It said the quake was generated by ground movements in the Philippine Trench and was tectonic in origin.

The quake on Dec. 31 registered a magnitude of 5.1 at the Richter scale.

A crack at the concrete ceiling of the second floor of the Davao Oriental Provincial Hospital here sent patients

scampering for safety.

"Hundreds of patients from the second and third floors of the provincial hospital hurriedly went out of the building for fear it might collapse," said midwife Crescencia Gegucay.

Hospital officials said the blood pressure apparatus and oxygen tanks were also damaged.

The quake also caused a power outage in Davao Oriental's 11 towns.

In Davao City, hundreds of picnickers at the shore of Lanang Beach, screamed and called out warnings to their relatives swimming, who apparently didn't notice the quake.

At the city's Gaisano Mall, the biggest mall in Mindanao and one of a few stores open yesterday, shoppers, sales

clerks and security guards alarmed by the jolts rushed to the nearest exits, a number of them in tears.

Some were stunned into immobility as the earthquake shook the five-level mall and just sat down on the floor, crying. "Lord, lord, lord" and "Jesus Christ!"

People inside the mall's six movie houses on the fifth floor nearly started stampedes.

Calm was restored only when the mall's management aired the 3 o'clock prayer.

Some shoppers, however, spirited out some unpaid goods amid the panic. Ferdinand O. Zuasola with reports from Allan A. Nawal, Jewel F. Canuday, Bobby Timonera, Froilan Gallardo and Carolyn O. Arguillas, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Rescuers find body of missing Japanese

RESCUERS have found the body of a Japanese aid worker who went missing while wind surfing off Catanduanes last week, police said yesterday.

Rescuers found the body of Tetsuya Ogawa off Baras town in Catanduanes Island on Friday, two days after he disappeared while surfing in fair weather with two Japanese friends, police said.

He apparently slipped and fell into the water, they said.

Ogawa, 26, is a volunteer aid worker from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which provides Japanese government grants and technological assistance to mostly poor countries worldwide, police said.

AP

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Public schools to get 35M books this year

BY BLANCHE S. RIVERA

THE EDUCATION department begins the new millennium with the biggest delivery of instructional materials to the country's 41,000 public schools this year.

The aim is to cut down the textbook backlog and provide every student with a textbook in each of five major subjects—English, Filipino, Math, Science and Social Studies.

Education Undersecretary for External Affairs Victor Andres Manhit said the DECS would deliver 35 million textbooks this year to effect a 1:1 student-textbook ratio from the current 1:4 in high school and 1:2 in elementary level.

The 35 million textbook total came from 4.9 million purchased through the foreign-funded Third Elementary Education Program and the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project, and 30.6 million bought through the regular DECS budget.

"There will be a big improvement in the textbook ratio after the delivery of the 35 million textbooks," Manhit said. He said that Education Secretary Andrew Gonzalez is bent on reducing, if not eliminating, the perennial backlog in textbooks, classrooms, teachers and desks.

He said the TEEP is targeting the 22 poorest provinces needing "massive educational investment" as recipients of the instructional materials.

But while it has vowed to deliver the materials before the year ends, the Department of Education, Culture and Sports has yet to complete the distribution of the 13 million textbooks it purchased for last year with the DECS' regular textbook funds.

Arthur Jay Fernandez, executive director of the DECS Instructional Materials Council Secretariat, said that about 90 percent of the books for 2000 had been delivered but the remaining 10 percent had been stalled because of operational delays.

When Imelda drove the British crazy

LONDON—Imelda Marcos, the notoriously temperamental wife of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, drove British officials to distraction when she visited London, according to official papers made public Monday.

Although her 1970 trip was supposed to be a private visit, files released under a 20-year rule show the exasperation of officials as they tried to cope with her constantly changing moods and whims.

Diplomats complained angrily that the tactics of Marcos—famous for her fearsome temper as well as her countless shoes—in winning an audience with Queen Elizabeth had been tantamount to "blackmail."

"The Philippine effrontery is almost breathtaking. There are limits beyond which we cannot and should not go to meet Mrs. Marcos's wishes," one Foreign Office official fumed.

Yet, with Britain anxious to promote good relations with the Philippines, diplomats were obliged to do all they could to make her visit a success.

They were given early warning of what to expect from John Curle, Britain's ambassador in Manila.



"I should warn you that we have learned from a trustworthy source that on her official visit to Expo '70 Mrs. Marcos was as exigent, difficult, tactless and inconsiderate as it was possible to be," he wrote.

"This does not unfortunately lessen the need to make suitable plans in the interests of our relations with President Marcos."

He suggested her agenda could include a visit to a stately home, "provided of course that Mrs. Marcos was there as the guest of the suitably Great Owner and not just as a conducted visitor."

He added: "The First Lady is highly egocentric, and will in my opinion be interested less in what she sees than in what particular attentions are paid to her... functions which serve to show off her beauty in public will have added appeal."

Her brother Kokoy Romualdez was franker when he met John Goulden, another Foreign Office official, in Manila to discuss the visit.

"The most important point which he wished to get over to all of us is that his sister is completely uncontrollable," Goulden noted.

"After the restraints of Manila she tends to behave impulsively when abroad, showing neither consideration, nor social discipline nor even an elementary awareness of public relations."

"She must be indulged in all her whims and the host government made to cooperate with her."

Goulden recommended taking a firm line.

"Romualdez and Mrs. Marcos thrive on other people's weaknesses but, if confronted by a firm negative attitude, they will have no option but to concede," he advised. **AFP**

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Pagcor seeks reconsideration for SC verdict stopping jai alai

BY MICHAEL LIM UBAC

THE PHILIPPINE Amusement and Gaming Corp. has asked the Supreme Court to reconsider its decision stopping the operations of jai alai in the country, arguing that the law clearly allowed the gaming agency to manage and operate the "game of a thousand thrills."

"It having been demonstrated that Pagcor's franchise includes the right to manage and operate jai alai, the court's fear that the plenary legislative power of Congress will be dangerously diminished may be unfounded," said Pagcor, through Government Corporate Counsel Alan Roulo Yap.

In a 36-page motion for reconsideration, Yap claimed that the language of Presidential Decree 1969—the law which created Pagcor—was clear.

"There is no need, nay, it would be inappropriate to construe or interpret the same differently or otherwise. As the King in 'Alice in Wonderland' said, 'If there is no meaning in it, that saves a world of trouble you know, as we needn't try to find any,'" said Yap.

He said the high court had conceded that the franchise of Pagcor was within the power of former President Ferdinand Marcos to grant since he "exercised complete control of the sovereign power to grant franchises" at the time.

"In any case, the wisdom or efficacy of Pagcor's franchise may not be questioned or even inquired into, since this function is reserved only to Congress, which may at any time revoke Pagcor's franchise if it so wishes," he added.

Spice Boys

On Nov. 29, the tribunal ordered Pagcor to shut down jai alai operations after it found that it had no congressional franchise to operate jai alai, much more enter into a joint venture for the purpose with Belle-Jai Alai Corp. and Filipinas Gaming and Entertainment Totalizator Corp.

The ruling stemmed from a petition filed by Cebu Rep. Raoul B. del Mar and the so-called "Spice Boys"—Representatives Mike Defensor, Federico Sandoval II and Juan Miguel Zubiri—seeking to stop jai alai games because of the failure of Pagcor to obtain the appropriate congressional franchise.

The petitioners claimed that Pagcor needed a legislative franchise before it could operate the number game since PD 1869, which was issued by Marcos, did not explicitly grant it the right to do so.

But in Pagcor's motion for reconsideration, Yap said the fact that the provisions of PD 1869, taken in their totality, "do not limit Pagcor's franchise to the operation of gambling casinos."

Yap said Section 10 of PD 1869 explicitly provided that Pagcor's authority was not limited to the operation of gambling casinos alone. "Pagcor has also been enfranchised to operate and maintain clubs, other recreation or amusement places, sports, gaming pools, which include lotteries, etc.," he said.

He said the repeated mention of the term gambling or floating casinos under PD 1869 "is understandable...but the enumeration found in Section 11 cannot be arbitrarily used as basis to conclude that only gambling casinos are allowed to be operated and managed by Pagcor under its charter."

Yap also stressed that the petitioners could not use the argument that operation of gambling casinos and other games of chance might have an adverse effect on public morals.

Traders happy with Erap pledge, Ecop head says

BUSINESS leaders are satisfied with President Estrada's commitment to genuine reforms to strengthen the economy, according to Donald Dee, president of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (Ecop).

Dee said this was the assessment of top business leaders after their meeting Friday with the President and the rest of the high-level Economic Coordinating Council (ECC) in Malacañang.

In a television interview, Dee said discussion at the ECC meeting focused on government's actions in relation to commitments that were made during the Philippine Business Conference meetings in October.

"Businessmen are happy to see results on previous commitments, not just promises, but actual action," said Dee.

He said these reforms included the revitalization of North Harbor, more funding for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and the putting up of needed infrastructure via more build-operate-and-transfer (BOT) agreements.

The ECOP leader said the President gave a presentation on the revitalization program for North Harbor, the major trade entry point into Metro Manila. In the ECC meeting, Mr. Estrada announced the setting aside of Executive Order No. 59, in favor of a program of public bidding by at least two operators for the right to run North Harbor operations.

Candidates' registration kicks off election season today

By GERALD G. LACUARTA

THE ELECTION season is on.

Candidates for national and local positions in next May's elections may start filing their certificates of candidacy with the Commission on Elections from today.

The filing period ends on Feb. 12, except for candidates in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao where the deadline falls much earlier on Jan. 14.

Some 17,000 candidates will be vying for 3,600 elective posts nationwide in the May 14 elections, based on figures from the last general elections in 1998.

Up for grabs are 12 Senate seats, all House seats, including party-list slots, and the positions of governor, vice governor, provincial board members, city or town mayor, vice mayor, and city or town councilors.

As earlier announced by the Comelec, appointed government officials must resign their positions upon the filing of their candidacy.

Incumbent elected officials, on the other hand, must vacate their posts only between February and March upon the start of the campaign period.

Those running for the Senate are deemed resigned on the eve of the start of the campaign period for the Senate on Feb. 13. Those seeking positions in the House and in the regional, provincial, city and municipal levels

are considered resigned by March 31, the start of the campaign period for these positions.

The campaign period officially ends on May 12, or two days before the elections.

The rules and regulations, as contained in Comelec Resolution No. 3253 dated Sept. 28, 2000, also state that active members of the Armed Forces and other officials in government-owned and -controlled corporations are to be considered resigned upon filing their certificates of candidacy.

Candidates for the Senate must file their certificates at the Comelec law department in Intramuros, Manila. Those seeking posts in the House may file theirs with the National Capital Region director, provincial election supervisor, or the city election officer.

Candidates for governor and vice governor of the ARMM may file their candidacy with the regional election director of Region 9 or Region 12, while those seeking seats in the regional assembly must file theirs with the provincial election supervisor of the legislative district where the candidate is registered.

The ARMM is composed of the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Provincial candidates must file their certificates with their provincial election supervisor, city and municipal candidates with their city or municipal election officer. Those city candidates in cities with more

than one election officer have to file their certificates with the election officers designated by the regional election director.

The Comelec said campaigning would not be allowed on April 12, Maundy Thursday; April 13, Good Friday; and on May 13, the eve of the elections, and on the day of the elections.

The Comelec will also prohibit the giving of donations or gifts in cash or in kind from Feb. 13 to May 14, or during the campaign period until Election Day.

On Election Day, it would be illegal to sell, offer, buy, serve or take liquor; and give or accept free transportation, food, drinks and "things of value," the Comelec said.

Also prohibited are the holding of fairs, cockfights, boxing, horse races and similar sports; and the opening of booths or stalls for the sale of merchandise and refreshments within a 30-meter radius of the polling precincts.

The Comelec also enumerated prohibited acts from today until the end of the election period on June 13, 2001. These are the carrying of firearms and deadly weapons; transfer or detail of officers and employees in the civil service, including public school teachers, organizing or maintaining reaction/strike or similar forces; use of security personnel or bodyguards by candidates whether or not they belong to law enforcement agencies; and suspension of any elective regional, provincial, city, municipal, or barangay official.

Pro-Erap show set in Senate grounds today

A PRO-Estrada group has announced plans to stage a "cultural/political" event on the Senate grounds today to dramatize its "call for reform, acquittal and renewal."

Adel Antonino, president of the Kapisanan ng mga Pamahalaang Lokal Tungo sa Ikauunlad at Reporma ng Bayan (Kapatiran), said in a statement that it's time that "we reversed the tide of hate and recrimination in the impeachment proceedings to one of forgiveness, change and unity."

Antonino said it would be an evening of popular culture and political satire coinciding with the resumption of the impeachment trial of President Estrada.

Principal speakers at the show include Ambassador and presidential spokesperson Ernesto Maceda.

Antonino said Kapatiran has prepared a campaign, among other things, to dramatize the damage the disclosures made by Equitable Bank executives have had on the economy.

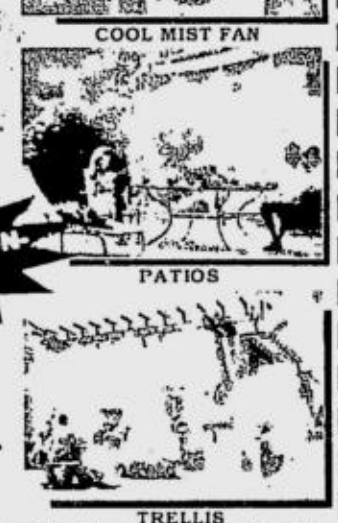
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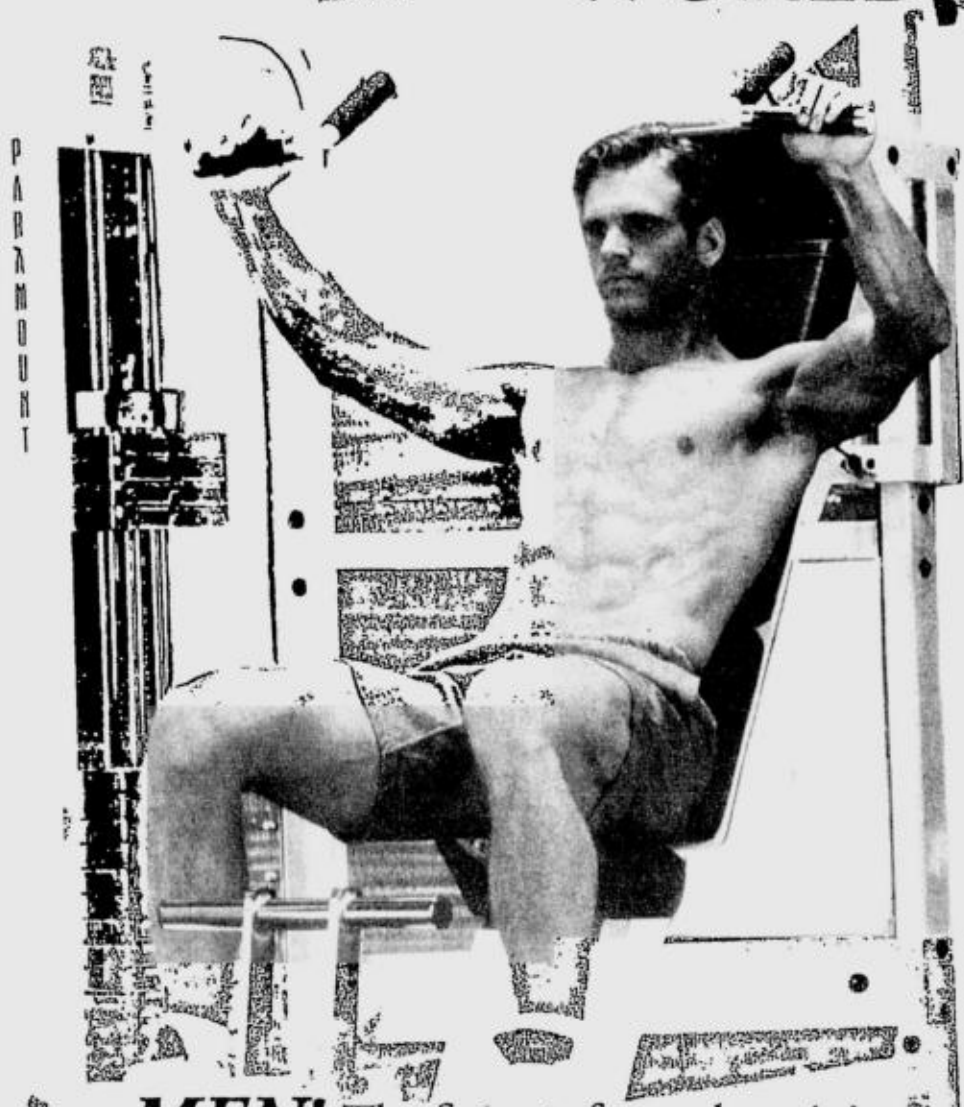
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Erap trial resumes today

(From page A1)

ter Ocampo revealed that the President used the name Jose Velarde when he transferred P500 million to a trust account from another account with a P1.2 billion deposit.

The trial was suspended without the defense being able to cross-examine the prosecution witness.

Though Ocampo is expected to be recalled to the witness stand this afternoon, the defense panel seemed more interested in cross-examining Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

A member of the House prosecution team yesterday did not discount the possibility of presenting surprise witnesses.

The prosecutor said they had lined up several witnesses to bolster Ocampo's testimony.

"There are more. There will be more testimonies against President Estrada, who is known as Jose Velarde. More are coming," Misamis Oriental Rep. Oscar Moreno said without elaborating.

Makati Rep. Joker Arroyo, also a prosecutor, said the prosecution was ready to continue with the direct examination of Ocampo.

He said prosecutors were raring to prove that the President's trust account with P500 million was ill gotten.

"She will also be ready for cross-examination by the defense," he said.

"The prosecution, consistent with the ruling of the chair, will also show that the P500 million in the investment management account (IMA) is ill gotten," Arroyo said.

Moreno said prosecutors expected Ocampo to continue with her testimony today, to be followed possibly by Equitable PCIBank lawyer Manuel Curato.

Ocampo and Curato were present when the President affixed his signature Jose Velarde on bank documents on Feb. 4, 2000 in Malacañang.

"Basically, Ocampo will continue her testimony about information relative to the account of the Jose Velarde trust account," Moreno said.

He said Mr. Estrada's defense panel was expected to try to stop the testimonies of Curato and that of the other witnesses.

"They don't want the truth to come out. Any statement that would pin down the President as Jose Velarde will be opposed vigorously," Moreno said.

Asked if Ocampo would testify on the P1.2-billion account, Moreno said "not directly."

More than anything else, Fortun said the defense was keenly awaiting the resolution by Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., presiding officer of the impeachment court, of the admissibility and relevancy of the charge relating to the Velarde account.

The defense panel wants to block the testimony about the Velarde account on the ground that it is not included in the second of the four Articles of Impeachment (graft and corruption) against the President.

Ernesto Maceda, the President's spokesperson on the impeachment trial, said he was supporting a call by the Senate leadership to "speed up the impeachment trial and try to finish it before the end of

January."

Calling the pace of the trial "excruciatingly slow," Maceda urged both the prosecution and defense panels to "limit themselves to basic and fundamental issues."

Maceda also urged the court to further limit time allotted for senators acting as judges in the court to question witnesses.

"The sooner we concentrate on our economic and law and order problems, the better for everyone," Maceda said.

Fears have been raised that the trial could drag on until February, with prosecution lawyers accusing the defense of applying delaying tactics.

Drilon said he would propose that the trial be conducted six days a week, including Saturday, so that the trial could be finished by the end of the month.

The impeachment court had decided to extend the trial by an hour from Monday to Friday starting today to make up for the 20 hours lost due to the extended Christmas break. *With a report from Armand Nocom*



ON HEIGHTENED red alert, police inspect all vehicles entering Camps Aguinaldo and Crame. JOAN BONDOC

A CALL — AN ENCORE — TO CONSCIENCE

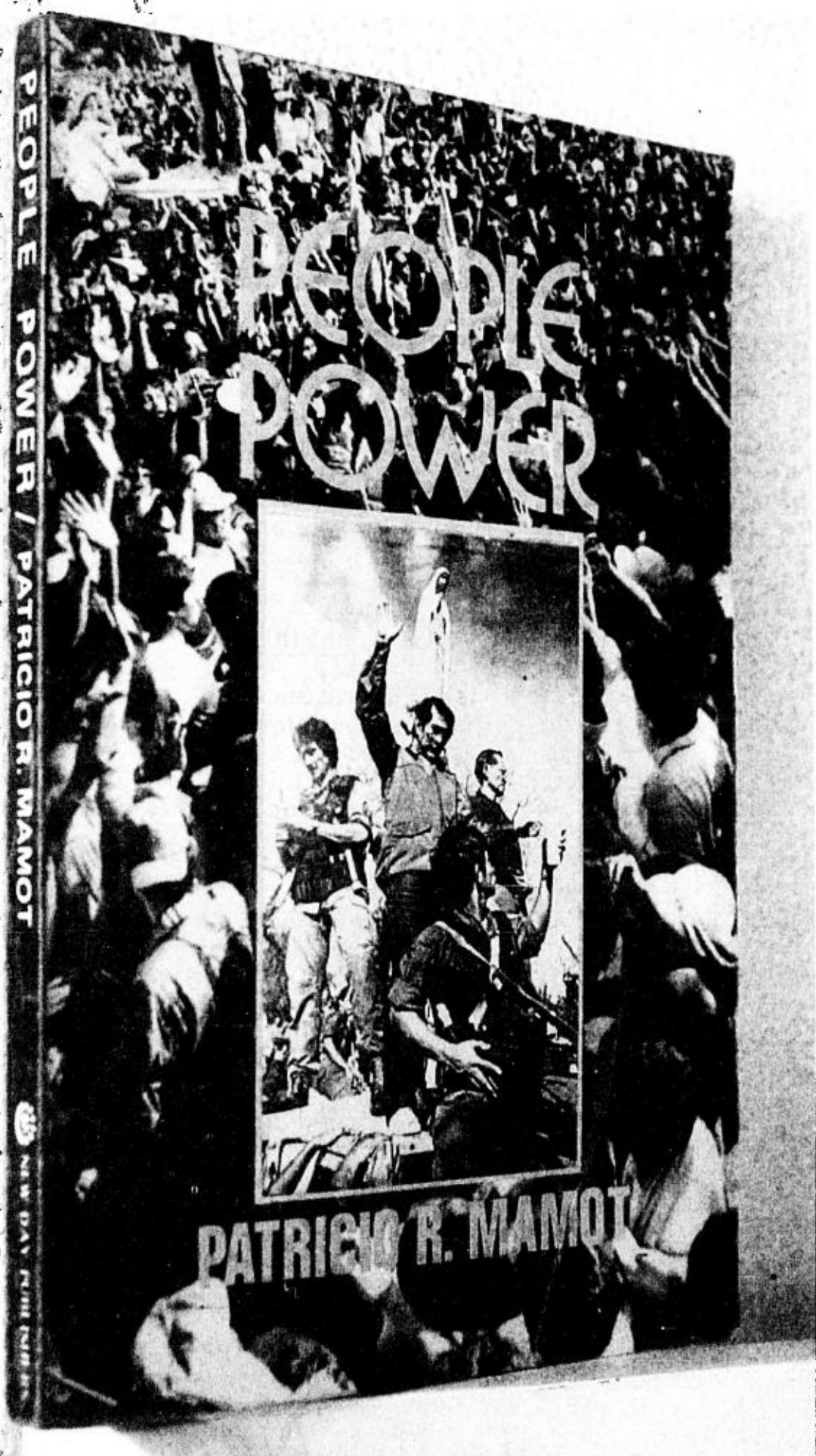
In the light of Clarissa Ocampo's disturbing and devastating revelation... We, the Filipinos Overseas, whom Pres. Joseph E. Estrada proclaims as "new heroes," because we remit more than US\$6 billion annually to our country, are urging and imploring—from the bottom of our hearts...

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Who has burden...

(From page A1)

the prosecution fails to prove the illegal nature of the deposit and its relation to the graft and corruption charge, the impeachment court may disregard Ocampo's testimony.

Although Prosecutor-Rep. Joker Arroyo promised to present evidence to prove that the P500 million is ill gotten, Davide's ruling on which party has the burden of proof in ill-gotten wealth cases has stirred a controversy.

Central to the issue is Section 2 of Republic Act 1379 (also known as the Unexplained Wealth Law), which provides: "Whenever any public officer or employee has acquired during his incumbency an amount of property which is manifestly out of proportion to his salary as such public officer or employee and his other income and the income from legitimately acquired property, said property shall be presumed prima facie to have been unlawfully acquired."

Presumption

Simply put, the law says: "If a public official buys or gets into possession of properties whose value is way beyond his earnings as a government official and his other sources of income, those properties shall be considered to have been bought or acquired through illegal means."

But that imputation of illegal acquisition is only conditional or temporary.

If the official can prove that he acquired the properties through legitimate means—such as inheritance, lottery winnings or discovery of hidden treasure—then the presumption that the properties are illegally acquired is set aside.

If the official fails to prove that the subject properties were not acquired through lawful means, the presumption of illegality becomes conclusive. When that happens, the properties can be forfeited in favor of the government after going through certain court procedures to be initiated by the Solicitor General.

Opposite view

Some lawyers hold the view that this presumption of illegality runs counter to the provision in the Bill of Rights, which provides that "in all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall be presumed innocent."

Following this line of reasoning, whoever is accused of unlawful acquisition of wealth is already considered guilty because the properties in question are presumed to be ill gotten long before the trial starts.

A presumption of guilt, in effect, arises in ill-gotten wealth cases.

The official is presumed guilty of graft and corruption at the outset and he has to prove his innocence of that crime—something which is not supposed to be done under the presumption of innocence principle.

Exceptions

It is interesting to note that the presumption that "a person may have committed a crime" is not unique to ill-gotten wealth cases.

Under the Anti-Fencing Law, mere possession of any good, article, item, object or anything of value that has been the subject of robbery or theft shall be prima facie evidence of fencing.

Thus, if a person is found in possession of a piece of property that belongs to another—for example, a television set—that person is presumed to be the buyer of stolen properties and can be punished for that act.

A similar presumption arises in the Anti-Cattle Rustling Law, which provides: "Every person having in his possession, control or custody of large cattle shall, upon demand by competent authorities, exhibit the documents prescribed in the preceding sections. Failure to exhibit the required documents shall be prima facie evidence that the large cattle in his possession, control and custody are the fruits of the crime of cattle-rustling."

Under our libel laws, a published article that is derogatory or degrading to the character or reputation of a person is presumed to be malicious and therefore a ground for criminal prosecution.

The burden of proof is on the writer to show that his article, depending on the circumstances

surrounding its publication, is either true, privileged, or was done without malice.

Application

The provisions in the laws mentioned that impute a "presumption of guilt" on the affected party continue to be applied or cited in the prosecution of the particular offenses.

In fact, the "presumption of ill-gotten wealth," as provided for in the Unexplained Wealth Law, has been invoked in some of the forfeiture cases filed by the Presidential Commission on Good Government against the family of the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

In those cases, the Solicitor General has argued that the value of the properties acquired by Marcos' family is grossly disproportionate to his recorded salary and other sources of income.

But former First Lady Imelda Marcos has claimed that before her husband became president, he had already amassed extraordinary wealth from his private law practice and his discovery of the Yamashita treasure.

In the instances that the Marcos forfeiture cases were elevated to the Supreme Court for one reason or another, the "presumption of ill-gotten wealth" provision of the law was not declared unconstitutional or invalid.

Legal basis

The logical question that follows is: Considering the presumption of illegality provided for in the Unexplained Wealth Law, why did Davide rule that the prosecution had the burden of proof that the P500 million is ill gotten?

Could physical fatigue and mental exhaustion have caused what the prosecution considers a gross misreading of the law?

Does Davide—who served with distinction as member of the 1987 Constitutional Commission, chair of the Commission on Elections and associate justice of the highest tribunal—know something about the Unexplained Wealth Law that the prosecution may have overlooked?

A close reading of the "presumption of ill-gotten wealth" provision will show that Davide's ruling may have some legal basis.

It can be reasonably argued that the provision is not a "stand-alone presumption," or a presumption that takes effect on the mere say-so or claim of a party.

Something other than its mere invocation has to be performed by the party who alleges that a property is ill gotten before the presumption can apply to that property.

Proof of income

Going back to the P500-million account allegedly opened by the President, the prosecution still has to show that the money is manifestly out of proportion to his salary and other income.

The prosecution has not yet introduced into evidence the Statement of Assets and Liabilities that the President filed in 1999.

It has presented neither his income tax return for the salary he received as the highest official of the land nor the income tax returns of the corporations he allegedly owns, to show how much money he earned from these companies prior to his supposed opening of the P500-million account.

Let us assume that the prosecution is able to prove the total income that the President received from his government paycheck and other sources in 1999.

When the incomes are added up, the sum will show that it is impossible for the President to have acquired P500 million from those sources.

It is only after that finding is made that the prosecution can invoke the presumption. Until such time that the prosecution has presented the evidence that will trigger the application of the presumption, it may be premature to claim that the P500 million is ill gotten.

In the face of the controversy generated by his ruling, Davide may have to explain the legal basis of his action.

If the prosecution makes good its promise to prove the illegal nature of the P500-million account, the explanation may not be necessary. But for the guidance of the public and lawyers, Davide should make the appropriate explanation.

Anti-crime group tags military in bombings

(From page A1)

warnings more bombings could take place in urban areas, another victim of the attack on a Light Rail Transit coach died.

Romeo de Vera, 39, a resident of Tondo, suffered burn and splinter wounds and died around 1:50 p.m. Sunday. His death brought the total number of people killed by Saturday's explosions to 15.

Another fatality, a girl around 8 years old, was identified the other day as Crisel Acusin. Her father, PO3 Jaime Acusin of a police mobile patrol unit, went to the morgue and identified the child, who was shown being carried by a *barangay tanod* in a front-page photograph in the INQUIRER on Sunday.

'Witness'

The unidentified "witness" has offered to testify before a "credible and independent" investigation body,

the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption said.

VACC spokesperson Lauro Vizconde said he knew the witness personally and had spoken with him by telephone the other day.

"But he wants to tell all that he knows to an independent investigative body; that's his demand," Vizconde said, describing the witness as "reliable and brave."

The VACC suggested that an investigative panel should be composed of representatives from the Philippine National Police, the Armed Forces, the National Bureau of Investigation, and an observer from the United Opposition such as former Defense Secretary Renato de Villa, an expert in security matters.

But VACC chair and president Dante Jimenez said a presidential directive naming the PNP as the lead agency in an ongoing investigation "is not acceptable, considering that the credibility of PNP chief Director General Panfilo Lacson is being

questioned and that he is perceived as an Estrada clone."

Military troops

The PNP yesterday remained on heightened alert, as police authorities said they would ask military troops to help boost security in Metro Manila.

Navy personnel will help the police in guarding vital installations as "part of our augmentation," Metro Manila police commander Chief Supt. Edgardo Aglipay said over radio station dzMM.

The military troops will be posted in key installations, including the LRT and the Metro Rail Transit, and financial centers beginning today, when school and work resume after the long Christmas and New Year holidays.

Aglipay did not say how many military personnel would be brought in, but stressed that all 14,000 policemen detailed in Metro Manila were already on heightened alert.

'Mad bombers'

Senior Supt. Nicanor Bartolome, Philippine National Police spokesperson, admitted some "gaps" in security that allowed the attackers to launch the terror attacks, adding that preventive measures were now in place to close the gaps.

Aglipay said the police had received more than a 100 calls from self-proclaimed "mad bombers" warning of imminent explosions.

He said bomb experts had been sent on wild goose chases across Manila because "we are taking all calls seriously, we do not want to take any chances."

Bartolome reiterated that investigators had developed "good leads" and were zeroing in on a group he could not publicly disclose.

"The only thing we can assure the people is that the PNP is pursuing very positive leads," he said.

Clues

Brig. Gen. Jaime Canatoy, Armed

Forces spokesperson, insisted evidence gathered at two bombing sites pointed to Moro insurgents as the likely perpetrators. He said traces were found of the chemical ammonium nitrate, which has been used by the rebels in bomb attacks in the South.

"The traces of ammonium nitrate found (in the Light Rail Transit station) and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport bombings point to the MILF," Canatoy said.

The series of explosions that rocked Manila over two hours on Saturday also hit a passenger bus, a park near the US Embassy and an abandoned gasoline station near a five-star hotel.

Security officials earlier pinned the attacks on a "tactical alliance" between the communist New People's Army and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Cooperation

Maceda said it was customary for the United States to send counter-terrorism experts "anywhere in the

world where a terrorism incident happens."

"They therefore have formally offered to send some anti-terrorism experts," he said.

He said the move was in line with an agreement between Manila and Washington providing for "cooperation in anti-terrorism efforts worldwide."

The offer is a clear "indication that up to this time, the US government is very supportive of the Estrada administration," according to Maceda, Manila's outgoing ambassador to Washington.

He was also reacting to rumors that the United States was withdrawing its support from Mr. Estrada.

In Washington, the US State Department issued a warning for US citizens in the Philippines to stay home "unless it is absolutely necessary to do otherwise." With reports from Voli Contreras; AFP

Bishops appeal for calm amid fear

(From page A1)

produce fall guys," the fisherfolk group Pamalakaya said in a statement.

Pamalakaya blasted Ejercito for claiming that his father was not capable of killing innocent people.

"Mr. Ejercito misses the point. His father runs the affairs of the state like a criminal gang, and a syndicate group has no qualms of sacrificing people's lives in the best interest of an underworld clique," it said.

But Ernesto Maceda, Mr. Estrada's spokesperson on the impeachment trial, said the opposition had the resources to stage the bombings.

"With the way certain segments of the opposition have been spending money, I guess it's not difficult to imagine that they can easily bring in bomb experts or specialists from abroad," Maceda said.

He noted that if the opposition could bring in an expert from the Scotland Yard to compare the handwriting of the President with that of Jose Velarde, then "they can as easily bring in terrorist expertise."

The prosecution claims that Jose Velarde, who had a P1.2-billion account with the Equitable PCI Bank, is the President.

Maceda was reacting to the allegation of Makati Rep. Joker Arroyo, a prosecutor, that only the government was capable of carrying out the bombings.

Diverting attention

Arroyo said the bombings were aimed at diverting public attention from the impeachment trial of the President and the economic problems.

Maceda said a good day to explode the bombs would be today when the opposition presents an "explosive witness" at the trial.

For its part, the Kilusang Mayo Uno criticized the government for pinning the blame on the Communist Party of the Philippines and its military arm, the New People's Army, and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

"The responsibility and the moral weight of the deaths in the bombings should be laid right at Estrada's feet... Joseph Estrada is no more—it is now the demented thug named Asiong Salonga who

occupies the presidential seat," KMU chair Crispin Beltran said of the President.

Salonga was a notorious gangster in Tondo portrayed by Mr. Estrada in a movie during the '60s.

"Since he has no courage to own up to his transgressions and admit to all the well-founded accusations being leveled against him... he has begun to resort to brutality," Beltran said.

Crackdown

In Davao City, the militant Estrada Resign Movement (ERM) expressed fears of a crackdown after the national security adviser pointed to the opposition as the possible perpetrator of the bombings.

"It's actually a veiled threat against groups calling for the President's ouster," said Joel Virador, ERM-Southern Mindanao co-convenor.

Officials of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Pampanga said the government's advice for the public to stay home in the wake of the bombings "was conditioning the minds of the public" on whom to blame the next bombings.

"It is an admission that more violence is about to come," Erwin Manalo, Bayan-Pampanga secretary general, said in a statement.

The group issued the statement after Maceda's advice for the public to stay home due to intelligence reports that communist rebels would launch more bombings in Metro Manila.

Manalo said only the Estrada administration was capable of committing the bombings.

"It is a way of saying to the anti-Estrada movement to stop the protests and wait for Estrada's acquittal in the Senate," he said.

Nothing to gain

But Maceda said the Estrada administration had nothing to gain from the bombings.

"The President will not get any benefit from ordering these bombings. It's like getting a stone and smashing it on himself. This will hurt investment greatly," Maceda said.

"That would be the most counter-productive thing to do because we are trying very hard to keep the investors; trying very hard to get the tourists to come in," Maceda said in an ambush interview following a New Year's Eve Mass at the Palace Sunday night.

"Right now, I'm sorry, that with the CNN coverage, I'm afraid that we have set back again our economic development efforts, our investment and tourism efforts," he said.

In an interview over radio station dzRH, Maceda said those behind the bombings could really be out to destabilize the government.

"They were hoping to effect an overreaction on the part of the administration, especially the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police," he said.

"What they want to happen here is an actual confrontation on both sides," he said.

Maceda said this was in line with the "resign all movement," which also calls for the setting up of a transitional government to be led either by former President Corazon Aquino or Chief Justice Hilario Davide.

Junta

He said this scenario might only create a military "junta."

"If that scenario happens, then all of us will be losers," he said.

Maceda said that they were not counting out former President Ramos as the one behind the bombings, considering that he gave the President a deadline to resign, "lest something happens."

Ejercito also took exception to speculations that the government was behind the bombings.

"Of course not. We are not as stupid as they are. Common sense will tell you that the blame will be pinned on us," he said of the bombings.

Despite Maceda and Ejercito's assurances, the country's biggest umbrella organization for migrant workers believed that the administration was behind the bombings.

"These brutal incidents could only have been the handiwork of President Estrada, his cronies, and his military cohorts. This is the 'first take' of the repressive actions on the people's protest movement calling for his resignation," said Poe Gratela, secretary general of Migrant International.

Gratela said the terrorist attacks were consistent with the administration's continued militarization of the countryside.

"As a second-rate trying hard copycat of his idol Marcos, Estrada is now creating a scenario to justify the declaration of a state of emergency or martial law to stay in

power," Gratela said.

Instilling fear

Bayan said it would escalate anti-Estrada protest actions in the coming days after admitting that the bombings had scared the public.

"We think fear has been instilled in the public, but it will wane as it becomes clear that the real mastermind is the Estrada government itself," Teodoro Casiño, Bayan secretary general, said.

Fewer people were seen attending Mass in Davao City. Most of them stayed at the church entrances.

Juven Badilla, 6, a first grader at the Holy Child School, sighed after the 6 p.m. Mass at the Assumption Church on Sunday.

"*Hangy salamat, wala ta nagrandahan* (Thanks, there are no grenades exploding)," he told her aunt a day after bombs went off in Metro Manila.

At the San Pedro Cathedral, most of the parishioners avoided the center pews.

Scores were killed when bombs

went off at the cathedral on Dec. 26, 1993 and on the Easter Sunday of 1982.

"The people will not be cowed. This fear can't divert the people's attention from the upcoming exposés in the impeachment trial. The people are angry," Casiño said.

He said the only way to counter the paralyzing effect of the bombings would be to hold more street demonstrations.

The Estrada Resign Movement, a broad coalition of groups and individuals calling for Mr. Estrada's voluntary resignation, will hold a rally at the Senate today when the impeachment trial resumes after a two-week break.

Bayan members in Pampanga are joining other groups at the Senate grounds today to denounce the President and to seek his ouster. Reports from Armand N. Nocum, Andrea Trinidad-Echavez, Christian V. Esguerra, Dona Pazzibugan and Norman Bordadora; Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Carolyn O. Arguillas, Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau; and AFP

CONSUMER & OIL PRICE WATCH

-Private Sector-

Thank you...

As we begin the new year, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our consumers and the general public for the overwhelming support and enthusiasm given us in monitoring the prices of oil and the 17 prime commodities purchased by the low-income households.

In 2000, despite the continuous escalation of oil prices, the Consumer and Oil Price Watch, in coordination with the Department of Energy and the Department of Trade and Industry, was able to temper the prices of locally refined petroleum products and other prime commodities.

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The era of globalization encourages mergers and consolidations to bring about economies of scale, greater efficiency, and lower prices for consumers. However, we must ensure that globalization does not encourage cartels and monopolies since there are now fewer players in the world marketplace. Right now, this is already happening worldwide in telecommunications, tri-media, airlines, cement, cars, and the oil industry, to name a few.

A globalized environment encourages price fixing. Therefore, Government regulatory agencies, like the US Federal Trade Commission and consumer organizations have to be more pro-active and vigilant.

...and a Happy New Year to all!

A public service message of:



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Some questions

SOME questions are begging to be asked about the Rizal Day bombings in Metro Manila which left 15 dead and about 100 wounded. Questions like:

- Are the bombings a prelude to the imposition of martial law or the declaration of a state of emergency? The administration has, of course, denied any intention to impose martial law, but so did President Marcos in 1972.

- Administration spokespersons say the bombings could have been the handiwork of the Abu Sayyaf.

But if the Abu Sayyaf did it, why did they wait for two months to retaliate for the all-out offensive against them in Jolo? And if they were really retaliating, why didn't they hit military and police targets instead of innocent civilians? And if you were the Abu Sayyaf wouldn't you rather flee the country and rest and relax with the millions that you got in ransom than invite another assault from the military with a series of bombings in Metro Manila?

- Other administration officials say that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front could have done the bombings. But again, as in the case of the Abu Sayyaf, if this is true, why did they wait several months to retaliate for their defeat in Mindanao? And why did they not hit military instead of civilian targets?

- Administration officials have named and presented "the usual suspects." What is curious is that last week police said they foiled a planned bombing spree in Metro Manila by the Abu Sayyaf with the arrest of Hector Janjalani, brother of Abu Sayyaf chief Khaddafy Janjalani, and two other persons. But Janjalani said they were in Manila to try to sell a video interview of American Jeffrey Schilling who remains a hostage of the group. Now, who's telling the truth?

- Still other administration officials say that the NPA and other leftist organizations could have done it. But is it the style of the NPA to kill or wound civilians? Is it not that their targets are the military and the police? Don't NPA members depend on civilians for support, and are they not pledged to serve and fight for the masses, not to kill and injure them?

- And yet other administration officials say the opposition could have carried out the bombings. But what could be the motive of the opposition? The prosecutors in the Estrada impeachment trial have said time and again they were confident that the President would be convicted. Why does the opposition have to conduct bombings when it is winning its case?

- Who have the expertise, the arms, the organization and the experience to carry out the bombings which appeared to have been done with military precision?

- The Left is asking: Weren't the bombings intended to serve as an excuse to crack down on leaders of the protest movement against Estrada and to discourage people from taking part in protest actions?

- And the prosecutors in the impeachment trial are asking: Weren't the bombings also intended to serve as a warning to the prosecutors and witnesses in the impeachment trial? And weren't the bombings so timed to take the minds of the people away from the impeachment trial?

- The targets in the bombings at the LRT station, the bus in Cubao and Plaza Ferguson in front of the United States Embassy were mostly *masa* or poor people, the people supposedly loved by the President. Didn't the planners of the bombings intend it that way, so that they could later blame the opposition and the "elite," who are supposedly anti-Estrada and who are pushing for his impeachment or resignation, for the deaths and injuries of scores of people?

- How true is the report that a top military or police official planned the bombings and used a team of convicts to execute the plan? If this is true, were the convicts promised pardons, commutation of sentence or some other forms of leniency in exchange for their participation in the bombings? Is this why the people who carried out the bombings had no compunction about killing innocent civilians?

- And finally, who had the motive and the most to gain from the bombings?

Some clues to mastermind behind bombings

THE LAST year of the millennium went out with a bang, not with a whimper. In fact, not only with one big bang but with at least five big bangs that killed 14 persons and injured at least 90, and millions of smaller bangs but some big enough to blast fingers, hands, feet and faces: how many, the hospitals and newspapers have not yet tallied as of this writing.

Who was behind the five bombings in Metro Manila? That is the question now uppermost in the minds of the people (no longer the question of whether Erap be convicted or acquitted). Yes, who was behind the bombings?

I am sure of only one thing: It wasn't me. *Hindi po ako.*

The Erap administration and the opposition have ready suspects. Malacañang said the opposition staged the bombings to force Erap to resign. The opposition said Malacañang used the bombings to set the climate for the declaration of martial law as Marcos did in 1972, or at least scare the opposition. The police have already "rounded up the usual suspects," mostly Muslims.

Whoever were the bombers, they should have one important qualification: they should have a good working knowledge of explosives. There are three groups who have this qualification: the military, the Muslim rebels and the New People's Army. The military is further divided into the incumbent and the retired rightist rebels, the RAM and YOU. The bombers in the present military forces could have been under orders from Malacañang, according to the opposition.

Now, who of these divergent groups are desperate enough to sacrifice the lives and limbs of scores of innocent civilians? Who are in a desperate situation to do such a dastardly act?

You don't have to be a Sherlock Holmes to find the answer.

The past year was really bleak and gloomy, what with natural and man-made disasters, a depressed economy, crime and corruption

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz



weighing down the year, capped with the impeachment of our President, the first in Asia, and now, more bombings. But I am an unabashed optimist who prefers to look at the silver lining behind the clouds. Instead of looking at the crooks and grafters and wringing my hands in despair, I look at the Filipino citizens we can be proud of.

For example, in the bloody Saturday bombings, I see two heroic figures: the two bomb disposal policemen, Insp. Nestor Salvador and SPO4 Roberto Gutierrez, who gave up their lives while trying to defuse a bomb in Makati. In the impeachment trial, I see not the defendant or his lawyers trying to hide the truth behind technicalities or some of the senators acting not as unbiased judges but as lawyers for the defense or prosecution. I see instead the witnesses who sacrificed safety, comfort and convenience to expose the truth.

We had Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson who opened the Pandora's box of evil infesting the present administration, and Clarissa Ocampo, Emma Lim, Carmine Itchon, Annie Ngo, Emma Gonzales, Shakira Yu, Rosario Bautista and other witnesses who testified at the impeachment trial to help the senators and the public see the truth. Like lighthouses in a dark tempestuous sea, they light up the bleakness of the year.

I like to think that the New Year will be better than the old one. That is the essence of hope, that the future would be better. Erap hopes he will be acquitted; the opposition hopes he will be convicted; everybody hopes

the economy will recover quickly; the jobless hope they will get jobs this year; everybody hopes things will be better.

Whether or not Erap is convicted, I suppose we would all have learned our lesson, including Erap. The question is, will that lesson prompt us to change our ways, will Erap change his wicked, wicked ways? Will we finally learn to vote wisely? The results of this year's elections will show that.

The San Mateo landfill is now officially and permanently (?) closed to Metro Manila's garbage. So where will the metropolis dump its garbage? The people of Antique are opposed to making Semirara Island as the new dump. There is a temporary restraining order issued by a court stopping the Metro Manila Development Authority from dumping garbage there. Carmona in Cavite remains closed. Payatas is supposed to be closed. So what will happen now?

You can see the answer everywhere. Huge mounds of stinking garbage are growing all over Metro Manila. The whole metropolis will be the new dump.

Secretary Robert Avenajado and MMDA Chair Jejomar Binay had a whole year to look for a new site. It is unfair to dump Metro Manila's trash in other municipalities; it is natural for these municipalities to oppose making their territories a dump, yet these two officials kept pushing for throwing their garbage into their neighbors' backyards. Now time has run out of them. What will they do? Besides campaigning for public office, that is.

As promised, here's the first of the New Year's daily Erap joke:

"If you win the lotto, what would you do with the money?" Erap was asked.

"I will use it to buy Malacañang Palace," he answered.

"Bakit, sir?"
"Para hindi nila ako mapalis doon."

Happy New Year

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



Isn't this what the citizenry has been saying the past two and half years of the Erap administration—to no avail?

I agree entirely. Even if it were true that Erap has reformed—and that is a humongous if—why should we accept him? Why should we accept a president who wants to buckle down to work only after he has been shown to be a goof-off? Why should we accept a president who wants to start acting like a president only after he has been impeached? Why should we accept a president who wants to be honest only after he has been found to be a crook?

While at this, you wonder what happened to Ninoy's other sibling, his sister. My e-mail is still burning from the letters of people who were shocked and outraged by Tessie Aquino-Oreta's opening invocation at one point in the impeachment trial. The one where she likened Erap's persecution to that of Jesus Christ—most of the e-mails said she likened Erap to Christ, a fact Oreta too would probably deny and qualify along the same lines as Aquino—and begged God to guard the Senate, bastion of reason, from "the hysterical mob outside."

My letter-writers have had their say about what they felt about the sacrilege. I will not repeat it here only because it is not fit to print. I can only add my own reaction to the reference to the hysterical mob that presumably lay in wait outside, croaking like frogs in whipping rain. It was to think: Ah, but that hysterical mob was what put the fear of God in a tyrant not so very long ago while he and his coterie of sycophants turned their faces up to heaven and asked God to cause people not to be outraged by them. That hysterical mob has lit the fires of truth and justice that dispelled the terrors of martial law in the hearts of the citizens, like the new day dispels the vapors of a bad dream, and drove them to do what needed to be

done. That hysterical mob was what drove out Marcos from his seemingly impregnable redoubt, humbling the exalted and exalting the humble, allowing Oreta to get to where she is now however her appetites far outstrip her abilities.

Which brings me to the rest of Aquino's letter, which defends his current passion for prayer and spirituality against the charge by a fellow Atenean, Toti Mendoza, that it is just another name for fence-sitting. "The fasting that I proposed to our class during our Christmas party is not meant to help our other classmates, President Estrada, get acquitted in the ongoing impeachment trial. The exercise hopes to achieve peace, reconciliation and justice in our country."

That is all very well, except for one thing. Which is that I remember again Aquino's interview for our project on *batas militar*, his eyes at once aflame with the recollection of the ordinary men and women who became extraordinary one day at Edsa, and moist with awe at the miracle of the thing. He never said it was just another one of history's compulsions, the vectors of human wills intersecting at one point, he said it was an act of grace. He never said it was basically a secular thing, he said it was God-wrought. He never said prayer and spirituality were separate enclaves that might never be poached by activism and heroism, he said the one partook of the other. It was Marcos who proposed to his countrymen in the twilight of his tyranny that they fasted and prayed not so he could rule forever but so that the nation could have peace, reconciliation and harmony.

I should think Mendoza was being kind to call that fence-sitting.

That's what drove me to write this column. I had originally thought of writing something more prayerful and spiritual, more pacific and conciliatory, to greet New Year's Day. But quite perversely, Aquino and Oreta have made me discover once again that true prayer and spirituality reside not in avoiding the world but by struggling in our own small way to bring truth and justice in it. True reconciliation and harmony reside not in avoiding confrontation but in fighting to push back tyranny and oppression. Not all who say "Lord, Lord" will be able to enter the Kingdom of God.

Not all who say "Peace, Peace" can wish others a "Happy New Year."

Awardees Ignatius would have approved of

LAST New Year's Eve, families gathered all over the nation as they have been wont to do, but it was obvious that the economic and political crisis had taken their toll. In the wake of the Dec. 30 bombing carnage in the metropolis, fear lingered and many people went home early from family get-togethers and avoided being in the streets. Among the businesses that suffered most were the hotels and clubs as people chose to celebrate the coming of the New Year in their homes, amid relatives.

It was obvious, too, that people had scrimped on spending for firecrackers. By 12:30 a.m. on Jan. 1, the noise had petered out, unlike in past years. Not that we are complaining. The noticeable decrease in spending on those limb-threatening firecrackers is one of the few positive effects of the economic crunch.

All economic forecasts for the New Year are quite dire, but for rank-and-file government employees, they come in terms that are easy to comprehend. For instance, at the birthday celebration of former Speaker Jose de Venecia in Pangasinan last week, former Bulacan Gov. Obet Pagdanganan noted that in many towns across the country, government employees still hadn't gotten their 13th month pay. This was usually due to the fact that many municipalities still hadn't received their Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA). He asked the people that had gathered whether they had received their 13th month pay and they said no.

The economy is expected to slip into the second half of the year, after some heavy spending for the elections in the first half. GDP growth is predicted to slow down to 2 percent for the whole year. Unfortunately, the heavy election spending will only increase further the budget deficit, which is predicted to widen to as much as P150 billion.

Amid all the difficulties there are always glimmers of light in the horizon. Last month, this columnist was invited by the Ateneo de Manila University to a special university convocation during which seven Jesuits were conferred the St. Ignatius Awards. These awards were set up to honor outstanding Jesuits and last December was the very first time they were conferred. My special interest was the fact that one of the honorees was Fr. Pierre Tritz, S.J., 86, founder of the Erda Foundation that has been helping students from very poor families across the nation stay in school. I have served pro bono for years now in Erda's board as its PRO.

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



A number of awardees were professors of my brothers in the old Ateneo at the Loyola Heights and Padre Faura campuses.

The French-born Father Tritz, who in 1974 joined 11 other Jesuits in acquiring Filipino citizenship, has always upheld the philosophy articulated by the great French novelist, Victor Hugo: "To educate a child is to save a man." As first and foremost a teacher, Father Tritz has always maintained that in order to break the cycle of poverty, the poor must be educated and trained in needed skills. He also believes that if the Philippines is to industrialize, it must be able to develop its manpower pool adequately.

To enable even the children from the poorest families to earn a living, they should have proper skills training. But as Father Tritz sees it, the first problem is how to keep them in school. As an Asian Development Bank study noted, 99 percent enter Grade 1 but only one out of every six kids manage to reach grade 6; the majority drop out due to extreme poverty.

Over the years, Erda has helped some 85,000 poor students remain in school. Many of them are today successful professionals. Father Tritz has approached Erda's mission with a clear Christian vision that is very much in keeping with the Ignatian spirit. As he said at the award ceremonies, "Even the scavenging child is the image of God."

In his welcome address, Ateneo president Fr. Bienvenido Nebres explained why it took several years for the university to decide to create the St. Ignatius Awards. As was obvious from the number of awardees, the Ateneo president said, it was not because they did not have outstanding Jesuits to honor, but it was partly due to the fact that some Jesuits felt they should not be honoring themselves. More importantly, "we were reminded that St. Ignatius dedicated quite a portion of the Jesuit Con-

stitution to directing Jesuits to avoid honors."

Father Nebres related, to the amusement of the crowd, that in a ceremony held in New York last year to honor a distinguished Jesuit, Fr. John Donohue, the awardee said in his response that the award made him fearful of meeting St. Ignatius. Donohue said he might have to hide the award when they finally meet. But said Father Nebres, since the award is named after St. Ignatius and the statuette is that of the order's founder, "we might get away with it—or we might get more of a scolding."

By the way, the statuette was sculpted by Canadian artist William McElcheran. It shows a lean Ignatius bent forward, as though "walking up the hill against the wind." The explanation is that Ignatius is following his Lord Jesus who walks through history in pursuit of the Father's purpose in the world. Oftentimes, this means walking uphill and against the wind.

But after all the debates, related Father Nebres, the Jesuits decided to give out the awards. "A century of outstanding Jesuit ministry in the Philippines is ending," he said. "A new generation, Jesuit and lay, is rising to continue these ministries and to build new ones. It is important that the next generations remember those on whose shoulders we stand and the fruit of whose toil and sacrifice we harvest." Father Nebres expressed the hope that a younger generation would find in the awardees' lives and testament the call and the courage to carry on in this new millennium and new world the mission of Jesus Christ to help build up "a world at once more human and divine."

One of the awardees, Fr. James B. Reuter, with his unfailing sense of humor, quipped: "When they begin to give you awards, it means you are not as young as you are. It's a graceful way to say thank you while you are around to hear it."

The first seven Jesuits to be honored with the award were: Miguel A. Bernad, humanist and historian; John J. Carroll, renowned sociologist and active social commentator on the Philippine scene; Juan Ma. Ledesma, longtime professor and trainer of diocesan priests and bishops; Benigno A. Mayo, Jesuit provincial and director of the Institute of Social Order; James Reuter, "whose parish has been the theater, radio and TV" and a leading light of the Edsa Revolution; Arthur F. Shea, untiring Mindanao missionary; and Pierre Tritz.

Who is to blame?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



MILF, the CPP-NPA/NDF, and even the political opposition, the Estrada administration itself must take ultimate responsibility for the bombings, the statement says. "The Metro Manila bombings is a terrible demonstration that Estrada has lost effective control of national security and public safety. It is not necessary, even if entirely possible, that an Estrada supporter be proven to be involved in these bombings in order for us to lay the blame on his office. Estrada's inability as commander in chief to effectively protect the lives of innocent civilians in our nation's prime metropolitan center, particularly the masses who ride on the LRT and public utility buses, from terrorist attacks is enough for us to declare him ultimately responsible for the damage wrought by these attacks. "Thus our cry as a people is: *Bistado ka na! Hindi mo na kaya! Alis na!*"

"WE DEEPLY mourn the innocent victims of the Dec. 30 bomb attacks," the statement declares. "Each one of these victims had a life of importance and meaning, which was ruthlessly terminated. We sympathize with the families and friends of the dead and injured. We declare that Estrada is ultimately responsible for the victims' great loss because of this president's critical failure to protect innocent people from acts of savage terrorism."

Those behind the bombings are terrorists, regardless of the reason or purpose for them, the statement says. Law enforcement agencies should pour all their efforts into the "identification, pursuit, arrest, prosecution and punishment of these terrorists in accordance with our laws."

At the same time, "we assert our right to continue our normal lives without fear, including our pursuit of a determined, truthful and just impeach-

ment trial as a mechanism for lawfully terminating Estrada's term as president. We declare Estrada as the one ultimately responsible for any chilling or distracting effects created by these terrorist attacks upon the people's full exercise of their freedoms," the statement says, while calling for the "continued vigor and vigilance of the impeachment trial participants, especially the prosecution witnesses."

THERE are many theories about the Dec. 30 bombings, says the statement. "Estrada's abject loss of credibility may have emboldened the enemies of the people to launch these terrorist attacks. Estrada's loose grip on the reins of the state may have weakened the ability of our law enforcers to prevent these attacks and protect the people. Misguided elements may have even thought that they would help preserve Estrada in power by undertaking these attacks." These speculations are still without basis on reliable facts, the statement reminds.

But, "whatever may be the eventual truth behind the Dec. 30 bombings...one central fact is clear today: Estrada has lost the moral standing to govern as president; he can no longer be believed as a national leader; he no longer has effective control of the machinery for upholding national security and protecting citizens' safety. For these reasons, Estrada must go now. "*Bistado ka na! Hindi mo na kaya! Alis na!*"

A PERSONAL postscript.

We had an agreement within the family that as soon as our fireworks display was over, we would spare a few minutes for silence and prayer before partaking of the midnight feast to mark the passage to the New Year.

But just as our moments of silence passed, and we began sharing our prayers and wishes for ourselves and the country in the coming year, our next-door neighbor set off a huge "Judas belt" that drowned out our voices. "It'll take some minutes, Ma, it's a really long belt," drawled my son when I attempted to wait out the firecrackers. So it was that our prayers for the victims of "Black Saturday" and our personal wishes had to compete with the pop and crackle of pyrotechnics. If this was a metaphor for something, I dread to imagine what it is.

And God created grandmothers

Krishna Freya E. Constantino

ONE day, God decided to add grandmothers to the family. He took some clay and fashioned a woman and then started to add the tiny, intricate details that was always present in His creation.

An angel passing by happened to see what God was doing and became interested in how God made His creations. The angel watched in surprise as God molded the woman's feet into a wobbly, crooked thing. "Are you crazy?" the angel asked. "Those feet can never keep up

with children as they run or take a walk to the park."

"But you forget," God replied as He continued to work, "that these great feet are perfect for walking slowly past things that matter to children such as bugs and beetles and a butterfly emerging from its cocoon. These slow feet will give children plenty of time to explore the beautiful world I made."

Then God added bent hands to match the feet. "Now, you call those hands?" the angel asked sarcastically. "They look clumsy and weak. They can never give huge bear hugs or even hold a child's hand just like the hands of a mother and father."

God didn't even bat an eyelash. "These hands are perfect for wiping away tears and dirt from a child's cheeks after some rough play," He said.

Next, God added a lap that disappeared when she stood up. The angel thought this was too much. "Of what use are they?" the angel asked. "A mother has a lap already."

"A grandmother's lap is different from that of a mother's," God explained patiently. "It is where children go to hear bedtime stories and it is where they go when they think their parents don't understand them because they know, they can find comfort there."

Then God gave the grandmother a smile on her lips. The angel couldn't help smiling too. "Why did you do that?" the angel inquired.

"That smile is a smile of love and understanding to all children. That smile turns to smile of sadness when it knows that the child has done wrong but it is still a smile nevertheless," God answered.

Next, God gave the grandmother a head full of gray hair. The angel could not contain its exasperation. "Now look, what you did!" the angel said. "She looks hideous."

"On the contrary," God replied. "Her hair turned light because of all the wisdom she gained from experience. She will be able to answer questions like why cats and dogs fight and why I am not married. Now, to little eyes, she looks dignified."

Then God formed eyes framed by eyeglasses. The angel couldn't hold back. "You seem to be losing touch," the angel said. "Those eyes can never read anything correctly, from storybooks to medicine labels."

"No they can't," God acknowledged. "But these eyes can clearly see the true motives beneath actions. They can see the feelings beneath the exterior, all that pain and hurt a child hides."

Finally, God placed the finishing touches on His creation. He kissed the grandmother and a glow appeared on her face. God did not wait for the angel to criticize His work without hearing His reason. "That is to bring to all children a glimpse of heaven, a ray of light in the dark mortal world," God explained. "It will guide children to the straight and correct paths, away from the trails of sin."

The angel was awed. In a very timid voice, the angel asked what it was that God had given to the grandmother.

God smiled at His creation and said, "That was my signature."

Krishna Freya E. Constantino, 15, is a student of the Iloilo National High School in Iloilo City. She dedicates this story to her grandmother, who celebrated her 77th birthday last Dec. 31, as well as to young children.

A packet of salt

Jason Paul D. Hermosilla

I WAS about to take my afternoon nap when my cousin came for me. He was asking me to buy *tuba*, as usual. I ran errands for everybody. It was a "privilege" I had as the youngest among three boys.

With the container my cousin gave me, I started the long walk to the store. The short cut was a trail across a piece of coconut land, a fishpond and some narrow creeks that led to the main road. The beauty of the whole tropical setting gave me an overwhelming surge of positive energy as I walked under a canopy of green foliage that was dancing in the wind. I thought it was another perfect afternoon in Leyte.

The main road was quiet. With the store still at some distance along, it started to drizzle. I looked up to see the whole horizon in a blurred panorama. The wind was cold and the rain started to increase in intensity. My light brown cap turned into a darker hue of brown as I ran and held it in place. Halfway to the store, a speeding truck gave me a good splash as it hit mud puddle. It made me frantic.

I was babbling in my mind. It would be a lot better if either of my brothers were told to run the errand. My grandmother's house was closer to the store.

My slippers were another problem. The sharp stones of the main road went through them during the run so I have to stop once in a while to get them out of the thin soles. And they splashed mud on my back as I ran.

I was completely drenched by the heavy tropical rain. I loved the rain but it just didn't fit into the situation. An afternoon of dreamy soliloquy had turned into an afternoon of troubled thoughts, endless complaints and blame. The downpour didn't show any signs of easing up. The store's downspout was like a fireman's hose as I entered the store.

I ordered the bottle of *tuba* that I had come for, paid the storeowner and sat down on a bench, waiting for the rain to pass.

That was when I noticed a small girl running toward the store. She carried no umbrella to shield herself and her pink dress. I felt my heart melt as she greeted me with a warm smile and entered. I smiled back and then I couldn't stop staring at her.

The little girl stood in front of the store with her dress still dripping wet; her frail body visible through her soaked transparent clothing. The water trickling down her hair was bothering her and she wiped her face with her hands.

The girl was fascinating. She always smiled when she looked at me, radiating happiness and contentment as if she never ran in the rain at all. I stared at her as she kept walking around the store, trying to generate much heat as possible to keep herself warm. Her right hand was clutching a one-peso coin.

The storeowner handed me the container filled with *tuba* and I accepted it together with the change. The girl then took my place at the counter, and asked for a packet of salt.

I looked more closely and found myself witnessing a more painful and deeper reality. It was something I had not recognized immediately. She was a poor farmer's daughter who lived near our house, and she went all the way to this store to buy salt for their family's viand.

I closed my eyes as I felt my heart sink in pity. I looked at her go through the heavy rain again, carrying a small packet of salt, making sure it wouldn't get wet.

I waited for the rain to stop. It was 2 in the afternoon and I was on my way to my grandmother's house carrying a gallon of *tuba*.

Suddenly the sky was clear and so was my memory of the girl with the packet of salt.

These people in my hometown in Leyte have enough sufferings in their lives to reduce all of my own problems to nothingness. In my childhood, I saw my playmates eat rice with salt for lunch or, worse, I saw them eat nothing for lunch. These people in Leyte have carved out a value in my being that I could never have acquired from anybody else. They gave me the inner strength, the courage to smile in the middle of an ordeal.

Jason Paul D. Hermosilla, 18, is a second-year Biology major in Cebu City.

An architect named Roxas

HAD architect Felipe Roxas' San Ignacio Church in Intramuros, with its carvings by Tampingco, survived the Japanese and the Americans, it could well have been the most beautiful example of religious architecture in Manila. Marilla Maria Norton in her "Studies in Philippine Architecture" describes the architect's work as stamped with genius. Aside from the Jesuit church he also reconstructed Sto. Domingo in neo-gothic style in 1863, built the church of Bacoor in Cavite and reconstructed the Ayuntamiento in 1878.

Felipe Roxas belonged to the Calauan, Laguna branch of the Roxas family where Hacienda Calauan, which belonged to Jose Bonifacio Roxas, still exists. Roxas left the country in 1840 and lived in Calcutta for three years before proceeding to England where he was to reside for the next 14 years, with the exception of two years spent in France and Spain. He was one of three Filipino architects who traveled to Europe for extended studies, the other two being Hervas and Arellano. It's a pity that his son and namesake who later became mayor of Manila never mentions in his book, "The World of Felix Roxas," his father's work or the years spent in Calcutta. As it is, his work can only be judged from whatever archival photos may be available to the researcher.

England in the mid-19th century was heavily influenced by the art of Greece and Rome: porticoes, loggias and atriums were in vogue. Roxas also witnessed the Gothic revival and the rise of the Pre-Raphaelites. No doubt he read John Ruskin's critiques; and all of these must have served to influence his style and concepts of urbanism.

Among the public works of Roxas are the man-made Canal de la Reina in Tondo that used to have an inscription, and a bust of the queen as decoration. Stone from Meycauayan and Guadalupe were used in two buildings he designed in the Escolta. The Singer Sewing Machine opposite the Parla-

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



building and "that (building) formerly occupied by Seiboth." Unfortunately, they no longer exist. There was also the building occupied by the Yebana factory facing Novaliches and Espinosa. (Due to changes in street names, I cannot reassure you that these have remained the same.)

Architecture as a profession was just beginning to be accepted in Manila at the tail end of the 19th century. Prior to this, the religious built their churches and convents and the government relied on their military engineers. People generally depended on what we now call master builders or master carpenters to construct their homes. Thus, Roxas returned to Manila at a time when attitudes were starting to change.

Among the private residences he designed were those of Roxas on General Solano, the building of the Japanese Club beside it, the house of Señor Rincon on the corner of Calles Solano and Tanday, the house occupied by Señor Manolo Yriarte (no mention of an address), which had the curious notation that Pedro Roxas ordered it built "in the event of his marriage."

But the house Norton considered "the purest expression of domestic architecture in the islands" belonged to the Enriquez brothers who had inherited it from their father. Rafael Enriquez, one of the brothers, headed the Philippine School of Fine Arts then located in the building. Since it stood between the houses of Dr. Paterno and Señor Legarda, the location must have been in San Sebastian.

The façade was colonnaded with massive masonry, while the arches "resemble those in many basements of Roman houses, of slight curve and heavy." The director of the school had a "deep-windowed, deep-rooted apartment" as his office. A garden surrounded the house but it was in a state of wildness and neglect unlike Dr. Paterno's, which was trim and sedately poetic.

Genuine surprise greeted the visitor upon ascending the stairs of molave that had "not a trace of heaviness, not a suggestion of clumsiness." The ceiling was painted in "soft Greek colors" (?), delicately carved and led to an amazing hall of over a hundred feet supported by nine Ionic columns topped by gilded moldings on the capitals. Norton waxed poetic stating, "It is a building to write a story in, or compose a sonnet, or dream an opera in or paint a picture...or leave a life behind one that was a masterpiece."

From the hall emanated the stately drawing room and living rooms. The main one had double Ionic pillars like the ones in the hall with a simple frieze but elaborate cornice and moldings. Opening out of these principal drawing rooms was a gallery or loggia held up by eight Ionic shafts with a floor of native marble. The gallery led to a smaller salon that opened into a series of rooms much like the palaces of Europe. In the rear were the servant's quarters, kitchens and storerooms. Built in the early '60s the balusters of the *azotea* showed the wear and tear of time.

The second best preserved house at the time Norton was writing was that of Señora Roxas that was "something not quite so perfect" in General Solano. It was partly a chateau, partly a palatial villa with a double entrance of carved steps with a private one at the side that led to the family quarters directly. The house had "large spaces and nooks of comfort." But for some reason the house did not appeal to the writer unlike the Enriquez house.



LETTERS

Justice will be served in the end

THE MEGA-BOMB testimony of Clarissa Ocampo against President Estrada should be more than enough to convince him to quit if there is still some decency left in him. But he continues to dig in. As we say in Tagalog, *sobrang kapal ng mukha*. Many people are saying that if this had happened in Japan or maybe South Korea, the accused would not only resign but even commit suicide out of shame.

Mr. Estrada has always maintained that we should follow the constitutional process and that he would accept whatever may be the decision of the impeachment court.

The hero in Clarissa

AFTER THE TESTIMONY of Clarissa Ocampo, the impeachment trial of President Estrada was brought to a different direction, the direction of plain, simple and unadulterated truth. I agree with the INQUIRER that it would be difficult for anyone, not just for the defense panel, to rebut her statements.

When Ocampo decided not to authenticate the President's "Jose Velarde" signature, it proved, without any doubt, that she is a professional banker. She is financially

The people should not be fooled by this subtle deception. He is saying this because he is confident that he has the needed number of senators who would vote for acquittal no matter how overwhelming the evidence is. This is the reason why people must be even more united and plan for much bigger but non-violent mass actions.

The solution would have been easier if Gen. Angelo Reyes and Gen. Panfilo Lacson withdrew their support from Mr. Estrada out of a patriotic sense of duty. Unfortunately, Lacson seems to have cast his lot with Mr. Estrada.

stable and has no political affiliation. Ocampo had nothing to gain and everything to lose when she stepped into the witness stand. She and her family are now in danger. She will have to live a careful life like Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, Emma Lim and the other witnesses who made statements against the President.

What kind of a person would make such a sacrifice? A hero, nothing less.

Clarissa Ocampo has earned a place in our nation's history. She has

One form of protest action I would suggest is for the overwhelming number of companies and individuals nationwide to defer the payment of taxes until after Mr. Estrada is removed from office. I understand that the taxes that are supposed to be paid can be temporarily put in escrow while the problem is not yet settled.

Finally, I have told myself, and many people I've talked to have said the same thing: God saw all this from the beginning and He will see to it that justice is served in the end.—RUBEN CALDERON, Kalayaan Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

helped the Filipino people realize what kind of President we have and how he has been stealing from us and especially from the poor. She has given up her own and her family's safety for the good of the Republic.

I pray to God that there will be more like her who will risk their lives in pursuit of truth. I salute her! May God protect her and her family. May the Almighty give her strength and courage in the days to come.—NOEL CARPIO, Taytay, Rizal

Defense must win indisputably

RATHER than trying to cast doubt on the credibility of the prosecution's witnesses and thereby discrediting their testimonies, the defense panel in the ongoing impeachment trial of President Estrada should do their best to prove his innocence clearly and indisputably, and not only through clever and technical magic.

An acquittal won narrowly based on mere technicalities cleverly cultivated by his astute lawyers to ease the senator-judges' consciences, will not pacify the anti-Erap majority or convince foreign investors to place their bets on a shaky administration.

Consequently, it's still going to be the economy that will bear the brunt of the political conflict and the majority of the impoverished masses who will continue to suffer, even if he stops his drinking, gambling and womanizing and ends up as chapter head of the Couples for Christ, which I highly doubt. It's not easy to teach an old dog new tricks!—JOAQUIN F. PEREZ JR., Panganiban Street, Naga City

Can democracy work for Filipinos?

DEMOCRACY does not fit the Philippines! It has allowed personalities like Joseph Estrada to reach Malacañang at the expense of the entire society. What Filipinos need is an authoritarian form of government with an iron-fisted leader to bring this country back on track. So some commentators argue in the face of the current political and economic crisis in the Philippines.

Indeed, democracy has allowed Filipinos to choose their leaders. But it is this same democracy that will enable people to remove their leaders from office if they deem it necessary. Democracy may allow people to commit mistakes in choosing their leaders. But it is this same democracy that will enable them to correct such mistakes, if they are willing to do so.

Democracy is certainly not the most expedient form of government or way of life. On the contrary, it is the most tedious, with power having to be shared among so many stakeholders and the rights of people having to be ensured. An authoritarian regime, with political power concentrated in a single person, is certainly more convenient. Policies do not have to be debated on. They are simply dictated by the leader. But I would rather have a tedious

system that allows room for people to learn lessons and provides them the opportunity to rectify those errors rather than to have an expedient system but with no mechanisms in place for people to right what is wrong and to ensure that their individual rights are respected.

Classical political thinkers like Aristotle certainly agree that it is ideal to have a single political leader. In his view, to have a monarch, or somebody who has exceptional capability and goodness—the first to allow him to lead and the second to enable him to lead for his people. Such a person should be made the leader for his entire life.

But Aristotle himself acknowledged that if monarchy is the ideally best form of government, it is also the form that has most tendency to degenerate into the worst form of government—tyranny where the single leader rules not for the sake of society but for his personal interest. Political power concentrated in one person is expedient. Yes! All right? Yes, but only as long as the leader uses that power for society's benefit. But the frailties of human nature would show that rarely does society find this kind of a person. And if society finds one, rarely does he remain

to be so for his entire political career. Thus, Aristotle conceded that it is better to have a system of government where several people lead and share political power. It may be less ideal, but it certainly is more pragmatic.

Several centuries later, St. Thomas Aquinas would agree with Aristotle and would argue that there is a need to temper the powers of a leader so as to limit his tendencies of becoming a tyrant. Society needs institutional mechanisms to disperse political power. Thus, though it is less expedient to have political power shared among several actors, it is the only way to lessen the probability of having a tyrant. It is only in a democracy where there are institutional mechanisms to temper a leader's powers.

But Filipinos are simply an undisciplined bunch of people who do not follow rules. Democracy perpetuates this lack of discipline. Only an authoritarian political leader with an iron-fist could make them follow the rules for an orderly society.

However, it does not necessarily follow that people simply don't follow rules in a democratic environment. Even Filipinos known for disregarding rules toe the line when they are in foreign countries, and demo-

cratic societies at that like the United States and Australia. Why? Because in these democracies, rules are enforced and enforced strictly. But they know that this is not the case in the Philippines. This is the reason why they blatantly ignore rules while in the Philippines. This country does not need to shift to an authoritarian form of government. It only needs to have a government that knows how to enforce rules strictly with no exceptions.

As the wave of democratization sweeps the world with people previously under authoritarian regimes demanding for greater participation in running their societies, it is ironic that some sectors in the Philippines are demanding the exact opposite. The downfall of socialist states and military dictatorships all over the world and consequent triumph of democratic systems appear to vindicate Francis Fukuyama's argument in his "The End of History and the Last Man"—that people have an inherent desire for self-recognition. It is this desire that drives them to great heights. And it is only in a democratic society where this desire can be fulfilled.—RAYMUND JOSE G. QUILOP, assistant professor, Department of Political Science, UP Diliman, Quezon City

Worried over garbage in Semirara

I AM one of the concerned citizens of Pandan, Antique, who is against the proposal to dump Metro Manila's garbage on Semirara.

Recently, the people of Pandan who are now living in New York, New Jersey and Maryland organized a fund-raising activity in New Jersey. We raised money and signed a petition addressed to the governor of Antique expressing our opposition to such a careless and dishonorable act.

The people of Antique, especially those living in the towns of Caluya, Libertad, Pandan and Sebaste, depend on fishing as their source of livelihood. The majority of them eat fish every day, and meat maybe once a month. It pains me to imagine how these people are going to survive later on. The transport of this garbage will cause a spill in our ocean one way or the other, eventually affecting our natural environment.

Whenever I go home to Pandan, I bring some of my foreign friends. They love the beaches so much, the clear water, pristine white sand, amazing corals, etc. I'm proud of my hometown and home is where my heart is.

Although I have no confidence in our government and local officials right now, I'm not losing hope that there are still good people out there who will be able to stop this, including some in media and citizens of Antique themselves. Since we are not there to take our case to the streets, we can only hope that the Antiqueños will do something about this.—LUISA HIMBING, New York, United States

Grief

IT'S Dec. 31, the day after Black Saturday. I started the day by switching on to AM radio, expecting a continuation of yesterday's coverage of the bombing incidents. I got a game show instead, a lot of screaming and shouting. An hour later, the games gave way to a talent show, or maybe more accurately, a trying-to-be-talented show, with one wannabe-singer after another crooning away.

I'm actually relieved. The Black Saturday coverage had become unbearable, deteriorating into a macabre road show. The commentators occasionally complained about the *usyos* or *ki-bitzers* converging

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan



around the bombing sites, yet they themselves had transformed the entire nation into one large *usyoso* crowd, blood and gore brought into our living rooms, today's special sponsored by some shampoo or vitamin.

The coverage often bordered on the tasteless and inane. At one point a commentator began to describe the contents of the plastic bags being used by investigators, naming various human organs, including "the organ" (as it is used in Filipino English).

Most of the time it was mindless drivel, the reporters apparently feeling they had to say something to pass the time. But even the senseless verbiage was a bit more tolerable than the terribly opinionated reporting. Government officials were put on the air every few minutes, each one going through the ritual of complaining about rumors that government forces were behind the bombings and asking the public to suspend judgment until investigators finished their work. Yet, it was these same spokespersons who would go on, after pleading for sobriety, to blame the Abu Sayyaf and the CPP/NPA/ NDF.

I don't know why these government spokespersons were so concerned, considering that they were the ones who kept repeating rumors of impending martial law and the bombs being set off by the military. There were only occasional interviews with the opposition and cause-oriented groups and one time, right after one interview with a representative of one such group, the reporter actually muttered, on air, "Sila naman ang may kagagawan dito" (They were the ones anyway who did this).

A few days earlier, I watched Teddy Casio of Bayan on television complaining about how difficult it was for cause-oriented groups to access the media, especially AM stations. The powers that be know this and have poured huge resources into capturing this vital segment of media which caters to the masses. Should we be surprised then that public opinion polls continue to show Erap still having more support than opposition politicians? Or that the man and woman on the street believe it's the opposition that is responsible for the country's problems, including, now, the bombings?

Politics aside, I worry about how media sensationalism and manipulation fail to address the problem of terrorism. In many other countries, public response to terrorist acts tends to be much more muted and dignified, yet firm in its protest against the violence. As soon as police investigators complete their on-site work, people flock to the scene of the tragedy, lighting candles, leaving flowers and handwritten messages expressing solidarity with the victims' families and their protests against terrorism. Ecumenical memorial services, and sometimes even huge street demonstrations, are organized to protest against terrorism. Often too, the speakers at these services ask the public to reflect on how their own indifference and silence may have contributed to the violence, such as when the assaults are motivated by racism.

We react differently, transforming tragedy into a carnival show. I know to some extent this is a cultural coping mechanism. The game shows on radio this morning remind me of how Filipino wakes are famous (or notorious) for its revelry, sometimes complete with drinking and mahjong. We suppress our grief until the day of the funeral, when we tend toward hysterics, allowing collective catharsis for mourners who, after the burial, can then move on with life.

Terrorism, however, is so much more massive, ripping apart our social fabric. Our rituals of melodrama and scapegoating fail to resolve the anxieties, and may even lead to denial. Filipinos are becoming desensitized to the violence, responding in the same way—momentary shock and outrage, then indifference—to the pictures of maimed and bloodied bodies, whether they be victims of terrorism or a traffic accident, a frat rumble or firecrackers.

No wonder we get sick pranks such as the fake bombs planted following the mall bombings a few months back. This Black Saturday, there were false reports of bombings phoned into radio and TV stations. And despite the bombings, Saturday night and the whole of Sunday we've had fireworks going off, some sounding like bomb blasts. I have no doubts some of those setting off the firecrackers obtained perverse pleasure from getting people's nerves even more frayed.

Earlier this afternoon, I heard one reporter interviewing the widow of one of the slain policemen. He was asking her which government officials had visited to offer their condolences. By the time you read this, the government would have paraded their scapegoats, oops, I mean suspects for the bombing. The impeachment trial would have resumed and Black Saturday would have become part of faded memories of a bad year.

Minus the sensationalism and cheap political gimmickry, people have to be reminded of the lives behind those numbers of fatalities and casualties. They included, as INQUIRER's front page story detailed, two policemen who lost their lives defusing bombs, a newly wed couple, a jobless carpenter, a stowaway boy and an unidentified little girl—in other words, a cross-section of Filipino society who started that Saturday like we all did, hoping for a day of rest, hoping for a better year.

It's time we learned to grieve with our hearts, off camera, off the air.

Coolness under fire

WE are fortunate to have a man with the stature of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. He may save the country from chaos and regain the good name of the Supreme Court as the last resort of justice, following in the footsteps of the first Filipino Chief Justice, Cayetano Arellano.

I do not know Davide personally, but my admiration grows every day as I watch him preside over the trial. He is very prudent, patient, mild-mannered and democratic—the qualities of a good leader. He listens to both sides of the issue and has a way of pacifying the contending parties. Because of his coolness under fire, he commands the respect of the senator-judges, the prosecution and defense

panels and the people in general.

I have yet to see him lose his temper, but when necessary he asserts his authority and his fairness shows his fine qualities and judgment.

He shows he is not beholden to anybody, even to those responsible for his appointment to the Supreme Court and as its chief.

Above all, he is God-fearing and implores Divine Providence by starting the session with a prayer and ending the pre-Christmas sessions with the "Jubilee Song" which he asked everybody to sing fervently. Such is the person of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., a man worthy of emulation.—LT. COL. JULIAN M. MALONSO, PA (ret.), 92 New York, Cubao, Quezon City

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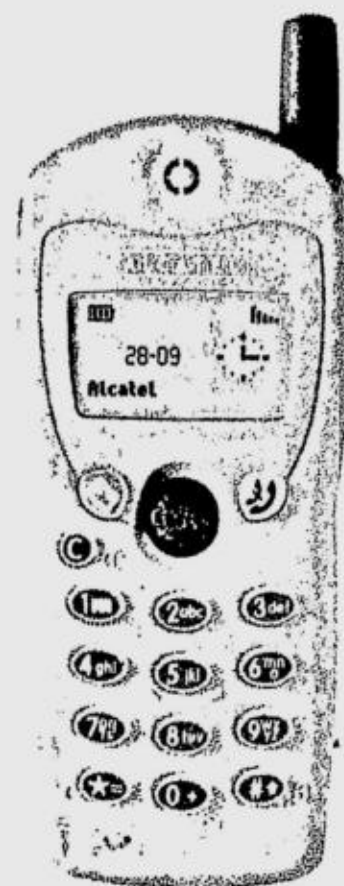
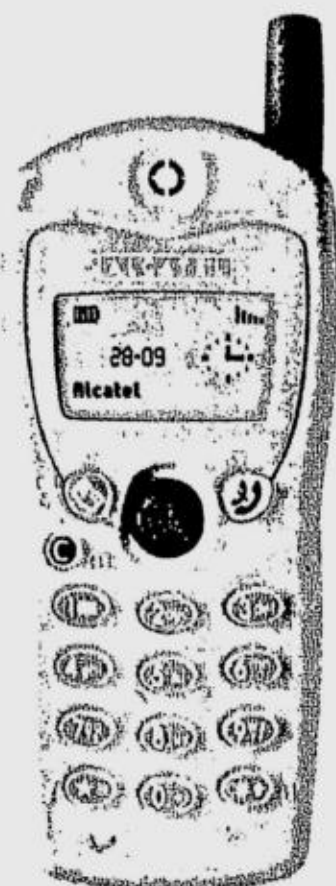
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The WORLD

MARGOT J. BATERINA, Editor

JAMPACKED DUTCH CAFÉ

New Year's Eve fire kills 5

VOLENDAM, Netherlands—A New Year's Eve blaze in a packed café killed at least five revelers and injured more than 130 others, Dutch radio and television reported.

The fire started shortly after midnight in a three-story building in Volendam, a picturesque fishing village about 20 km northeast of Amsterdam, the Dutch capital.

Teenage partygoers jumped from the windows of The Little Heaven café on the top floor to escape the flames, reports said.

A Dutch TV correspondent said people were pulling unconscious victims out through the windows by their hair.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known, but eyewitnesses said there was a large explosion, possibly from fireworks.

"There was an explosion and there was smoke, lots of smoke," an unidentified eyewitness said in a television interview. "In one instant, everything was gone, and everyone was panicking."

Dutch television showed amateur video images of firefighters attempting to resuscitate victims on the rooftops of nearby buildings while ambulances from across the country ferried dozens to emergency rooms.

Dozens of ambulances and firefighting crews were called in from around the region to deal with the calamity.

A hospital director in Amsterdam was quoted in radio reports as saying that 53 people had been admitted, about half of them in critical condition with burn and inhalation injuries. The victims, he said, were almost all 17-30 years old.

"It was a night of terror," said

the Volendam mayor, identified only as F. IJsselmuiden, "I saw someone die."

About 700 people were reportedly in one of the three cafés located in the building in the Volendam harbor.

The mayor said all cafés in the town had recently been inspected for fire code violations.

"I can't say at this point there was any reason to suspect this café was unsafe," he said. **AP**

Singapore nabs sect activists

SINGAPORE—Singapore police arrested at least 15 adherents of the Falun Gong group who gathered on New Year's Eve for a memorial to more than 100 of their colleagues they claim had died in Chinese prisons, witnesses said Monday.

Police moved in on the gathering in Singapore's MacRitchie Reservoir Park at around midnight and herded the practitioners into a police bus, which then left the area, an AFP photographer at the scene said.

The photographer said many of the members of the Falun Gong movement attempted to struggle against the police before being shoved into the dark-blue bus and taken to a police station.

Practitioners who voluntarily left the park were not arrested.

Jeffrey Jiang, a spokesperson for the group, said about 15 of his colleagues were arrested, including a couple whose nine-year-old child was left behind.

"About 15 practitioners have been detained by the police," he said. He said they were told by the police that they could post a bond for their colleagues' freedom after 24 hours.

Those arrested were mostly Singaporeans and a few Chinese nationals, he said.

Carrying two cardboard posters bearing the names and pictures of 107 Falun Gong adherents who they claimed died in Chinese prisons, about 100 practitioners gathered at the park Sunday evening.

China has banned the Falun Gong, labeling it a subversive group. The Falun Gong is registered as a legal organization in Singapore.

"We were very peaceful. It was a non-violent way to commemorate our colleagues who have died in Chinese prisons after being jailed by the authorities there," Jiang said. **AFP**

Suu Kyi spends 101st day of house arrest

BANGKOK—Burma (also known as Myanmar) pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi spent her 101st consecutive day under virtual house arrest as the New Year began Monday, waiting for the military government to make good on a promise to release her.

Suu Kyi was confined to her Rangoon home on Sept. 22 after she defied government restrictions on her movement and tried to travel by train to the northern city of Mandalay to visit members of her embattled National League for Democracy.

In all, nine NLD leaders were put under confinement, but six were released Dec. 1. Party heavyweights NLD Chair Aung Shwe and Vice Chair Tin Oo remain detained and about 80 NLD supporters arrested at the same time are believed held at Rangoon's Insein Prison, according to diplomats.

One window of opportunity for the junta to ease restrictions on Suu Kyi could be a visit starting Friday by UN special envoy to Burma Razali Ismail, who is charged with the difficult task of brokering a political dialogue between the Burma government and the NLD.

Rangoon-based diplomats suggest Suu Kyi could be released after Razali's five-day visit because it would give an impression the move would be due to the UN envoy's mediation, rather than pressure from Europe.

Razali, a former Malaysian diplomat, was able to meet with Suu Kyi twice at her house during a visit in October. He is the only diplomat to have had contact with Suu Kyi since her confinement began. **AP**

Anger over 4 deaths deters peace efforts

JERUSALEM—The bodies of two Palestinian policemen were found Monday after a gunbattle and earlier a Palestinian villager died after what witnesses called a drive-by shooting by Jewish settlers, as both sides called for revenge after the killings of two high-profile Jewish and Palestinian figures.

Anger over Sunday's attacks further threatened US President Bill Clinton's efforts to broker a final Mideast peace deal, with less than three weeks left to go in his term.

The two Palestinian policemen were killed late Sunday night on the outskirts of the northern West Bank town of Tulkarem. The Army said they were killed in a gunbattle with Israeli forces. Palestinian hospital officials said they were both shot by machine-gun fire and the bones in their hands had been crushed suggesting they may have been tortured. Gunbattles between Palestinian



ARAFAT

gunmen and Israeli soldiers raged overnight throughout the West Bank and inside the Gaza Strip as well.

Early Monday, a 22-year-old Palestinian died of a head wound suffered when Jewish settlers fired

from a vehicle on a crowd in his West Bank village, witnesses said. There was no immediate word from police on Sunday's shooting.

Palestinians scheduled marches and demonstrations throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Monday, in a show of strength for Yasser Arafat's Fatah on its 36th anniversary.

Arafat founded Fatah in exile in 1964, and it quickly became the dominant force in the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Arafat became head of the PLO in 1968, a year after Israel captured the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and has held the position ever since.

Grassroots leaders of Fatah and other Palestinian groups have been pressing Arafat to turn down peace proposals offered by Clinton, denouncing the plan's compromises—such as giving up on return for most Palestinian refugees—in fiery-toned public rallies. **AP**

A LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.

TO PRESIDENT JOSEPH EJERCITO ESTRADA:

Much as we want to believe in your integrity and capability, the unraveling facts show the contrary. 1) Corruption / bribery / immorality, 2) cronyism / protectionism, 3) peso devaluation to unprecedented level, 4) loss of local and foreign investment, 5) rising prices, unemployment and poverty, and 6) the continuing economic downturn and political instabilities may yet make the Philippines amongst the worst/poorest nations. And so Mr. President, just as you've been valiant in your movies, now is the time to do the grandest act you can possibly ever do. That is, we hereby join the millions of people in courteously demanding your resignation. Have that true courage before the impeachment court trial is over, and in lieu of being dishonored you will be vindicated with such a heroic sacrifice for the sake and welfare of your people and country!

TO THE SENATORS:

Should the President not spare you and your future by not resigning before the end of impeachment trial, there's always that difficult moment to break-away and undo what is wrong and vote what is right and best for the country and the Filipino people. We earnestly pray that may the Lord Almighty guide your conscience as you make the most important political and moral decision you'll probably make in your life. For it affects not only the President of the Philippines but more importantly so the entire country and the Filipino people. As we watch you (in TV live program) till the wee hours of dawn in USA, some of you have been clearly defending the President despite the overwhelming credible testimonies and evidences presented. Glory to all the witnesses (Gov. Singson, Emma Lim, Clarissa Ocampo, et al) who bravely defied inducements and threats in bringing out the truth and nothing but the truth. Honorable senators, vote righteously and conscientiously so as in the end you will be looked up to, and may that serve as a warning and reminder to all public officials!

TO THE FILIPINO PEOPLE:

Just to let you know that the love of our native country has never waned from distant afar. We view with great concern the rapidly worsening condition in the Philippines as we are also pained by the decline in your quality of life due to economic deterioration caused by a corrupt and inept administration. And knowing the gravity of recent events, we cannot but help to make a strong stand. Come what may, together with millions of Filipinos from all walks of life and from everywhere, the people's power shall and will prevail again!

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UNITED PAMPANGA LEADERS COUNCIL - CALIFORNIA, U.S.A.

Fireworks, good cheer, high hopes abound as world welcomes Year 2001

LONDON—Much of the world welcomed 2001 with fireworks, good cheer and optimism, and even in troubled lands the hope of a better future prevailed.

Bundled up in a red cloak on unusually blustery cold night in Italy, Pope John Paul II made a midnight New Year's Eve appearance to a prayerful, cheering crowd in St. Peter's Square. Yugoslavia's celebrations, the first since the ouster of Slobodan Milosevic, were dubbed "the first free New Year," temple bells tolled in Japan and tens of thousands gathered for a carnival in Hong Kong.

In Argentina, police blocked off Corrientes Avenue in Buenos Aires to create space for a New Year's Eve tango-fest.

"What US Naval Observatory, arranged to mark the new millennium accurately with a celebration for 3,000 people at its Washington headquarters. Under the widely used Gregorian calendar, which started with the year 1, the third millennium begins on Jan. 1, 2001.

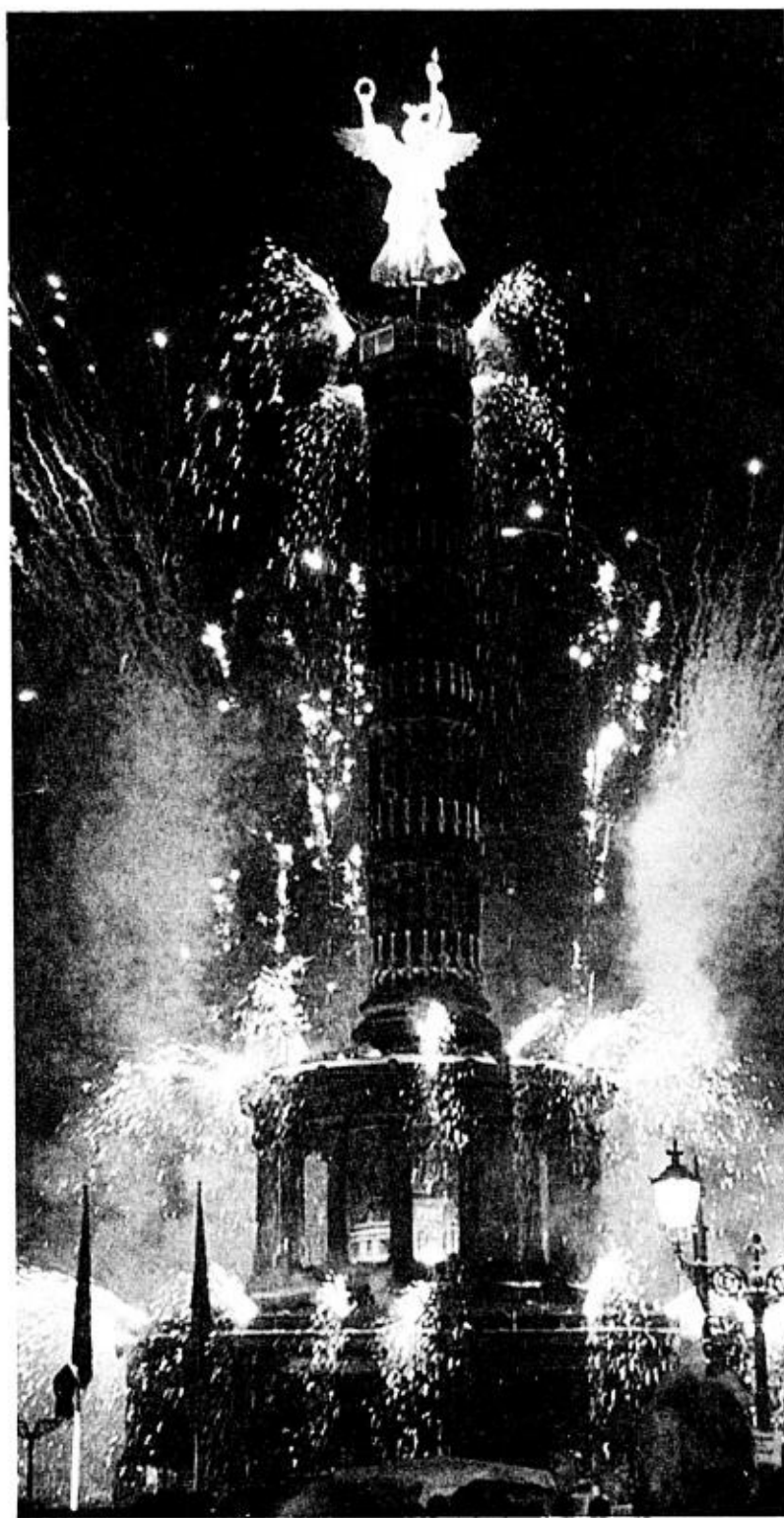
The new year also marked the 100th birthday of Australia. From Cuban leader Fidel Castro to outgoing US President Bill Clinton, the world Monday congratulated Australia on its 100th birthday.

While Castro complimented Australians on their beautiful country, Clinton cited Australia as a model for other nations on the centenary of its federation.

In all, Canberra has received more than 70 messages from world leaders.

Las Vegas and Denver also threw "real millennium" bashes, with hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on fireworks, to make up for fizzled celebrations last year.

But in Turkey, a bomb explosion in downtown Istanbul injured 10 people early Monday. Thousands of panicked people celebrating in nearby Taksim Square, which is surrounded by chic shops, cafés and cine a launch pad.



FIREWORKS light up Berlin's landmark Victory column (left) during the new millennium celebrations Jan. 1. About one million revelers welcomed the New Year around the Victory column and the Brandenburg Gate. (Above) Happy 100th Birthday, Australia. Symbols of Australia like a rainbow serpent (an allusion to Aboriginal folklore) and the Star of the Centenary of Commemoration of Australia's membership in the Commonwealth are highlighted with a burst of fireworks.

REUTERS

Russians marked the holiday with gift-giving and decorating homes with images of the Santa Claus-like Dyed Moroz (Grandfather Frost) and his sidekick Snegurochka (Snow Maiden). Christmas, an official holiday since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, is celebrated on Jan. 7 on the Orthodox calendar.

In London, the Millennium Dome had a rare full house for a dance party before closing for good, ending a year of controversy over the expense of building the world's largest enclosed space and its inability to attract enough customers to pay its own way.

In Japan, as the Year of the Dragon gave way to the Year of the Snake

at midnight Sunday, temple bells sounded 108 times, symbolically driving out the 108 sins in the Buddhist catalogue.

Many people began the customary visits to shrines and temples that will take place over the next few days.

"The Japanese will refresh their minds with these visits," said Tsutomu Kurita, an official at Tokyo's Meiji shrine.

Taiwan marked New Year's Day by lifting a 51-year-old ban on voyages from tiny Taiwanese-controlled islets near the Chinese coast to the mainland, supporters look on the first legal voyage Monday, along a route taken by smugglers for years.

AFP/AP

Clinton signs 1st war crime court pact

UNITED NATIONS—In a down-to-the-wire decision hailed by human rights experts, the United States signed the treaty creating the world's first permanent war crimes court despite fears that the tribunal could unfairly target Americans.

US President Bill Clinton authorized the signature Sunday—the last day possible—to "reaffirm our strong support for international accountability and for bringing to justice perpetrators of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity."

But reflecting concerns from the Defense Department and congressional Republicans, Clinton said the treaty should not be submitted to the Senate for ratification until the United States received more assurances that US personnel wouldn't be subject to frivolous prosecutions.

The treaty should not be submitted to the Senate for ratification until certain concerns are met, he said.

"I believe that a properly constituted and structured International Criminal Court would make a profound contribution in deterring egregious human rights abuses worldwide..." the president said in a statement issued at the White House.

Human rights experts said the US signature—while largely symbolic—would allow the United States to remain actively involved in the negotiations to create the court, which is expected to come into existence in about two years.

"My hope is that the new administration will see the constructive engagement approach as the right one," said William Pace, who heads an international coalition of grassroots organizations supporting the court.

AP

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Across the **NATION**

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

More rebel offensives predicted in Camarines

NAGA CITY—New People's Army guerrillas made good their threat to step up their offensives during the holidays and launched more attacks on government targets, particularly in Camarines Sur, according to a top provincial police official.

Julian S. Juanillas, deputy police chief of Camarines Sur, said the communist rebellion in the province appears to be regaining lost ground especially during the third quarter of 2000.

"(Police intelligence reports and statistics) show that the Communist Party of the Philippines-NPA has been significantly achieving gains in its terroristic activities, which are evident in the development of its armed capabilities," said Juanillas.

He added that the guerrillas are infiltrating more and more villages and luring more and more young men to their ranks.

Juanillas said the police are easy prey to the guerrillas because they are "more vulnerable" targets than military men.

"Everybody can come and go in police stations and the NPA takes advantage of this situation by attacking policemen on duty (who were caught off-guard)," said Juanillas.

There were three violent incidents involving the NPA that were recorded this year, resulting in the death of four policemen and five civilians in Camarines Sur.

The latest attack by NPA guerrillas on the Caramoran town hall on Nov. 18 led to the death of non-combatants and destroyed public property worth at least P1.5 million.

"Increased NPA membership in the province is attributed to the stagnation (of Bicol). Insurgency thrives when there is poverty," said Juanillas.

The NPAs are looking for a cause to strengthen their recruitment campaign and win sympathy from the people in times of crisis, he added.

"They will take advantage of the ongoing political turmoil in Manila, especially now that election time is approaching," Juanillas pointed out.

Although the AFP is primarily responsible for fighting the guerrillas, the Camarines Sur police is helping the Army in battling the communists, he said.

Juanillas said Executive Order 110 issued by President Estrada on June 15, 1999 mandates the PNP to assist the military in its anti-insurgency operations. *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

2 power plants in Quezon targets of NPAs, say cops

BY DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—More policemen were sent to guard two power plants in Quezon province to thwart any possible attacks by communist guerrillas who stepped up their offensives in the provinces just as a bombing wave ripped through Metro Manila on Saturday.

Senior Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino, Quezon police chief, said he ordered more policemen sent to Mauban and Pagbilao, two towns that host power plants.

The plants, one near the Lamon Bay and the other in front of Tayabas Bay, supply some of Metro Manila's power needs.

Alejandrino said there is only one police detachment near the Hopewell Power Plant in Barangay Pulo, Pagbilao, and this may not be enough to secure the area.

The order to send more men to secure the two power plants was issued as New People's Army guerrillas launched offensives Saturday (See related story at left) that coincided with a wave of bombings that rocked Metro Manila and sent shock waves across the country.

In San Narciso town, at least 20 NPA guerrillas descended on a hacienda, burned equipment and vehicles, but harmed no one.

Alejandrino, Quezon police chief, said the guerrillas boarded a public utility jeep and stopped by Sitio Kulisan in Barangay San Juan where they set up a checkpoint at about 3 p.m. Saturday.

The guerrillas later commandeered a dump truck owned by hacienda owner Domingo Reyes and used the truck during the raid on the estate, according to Alejandrino.

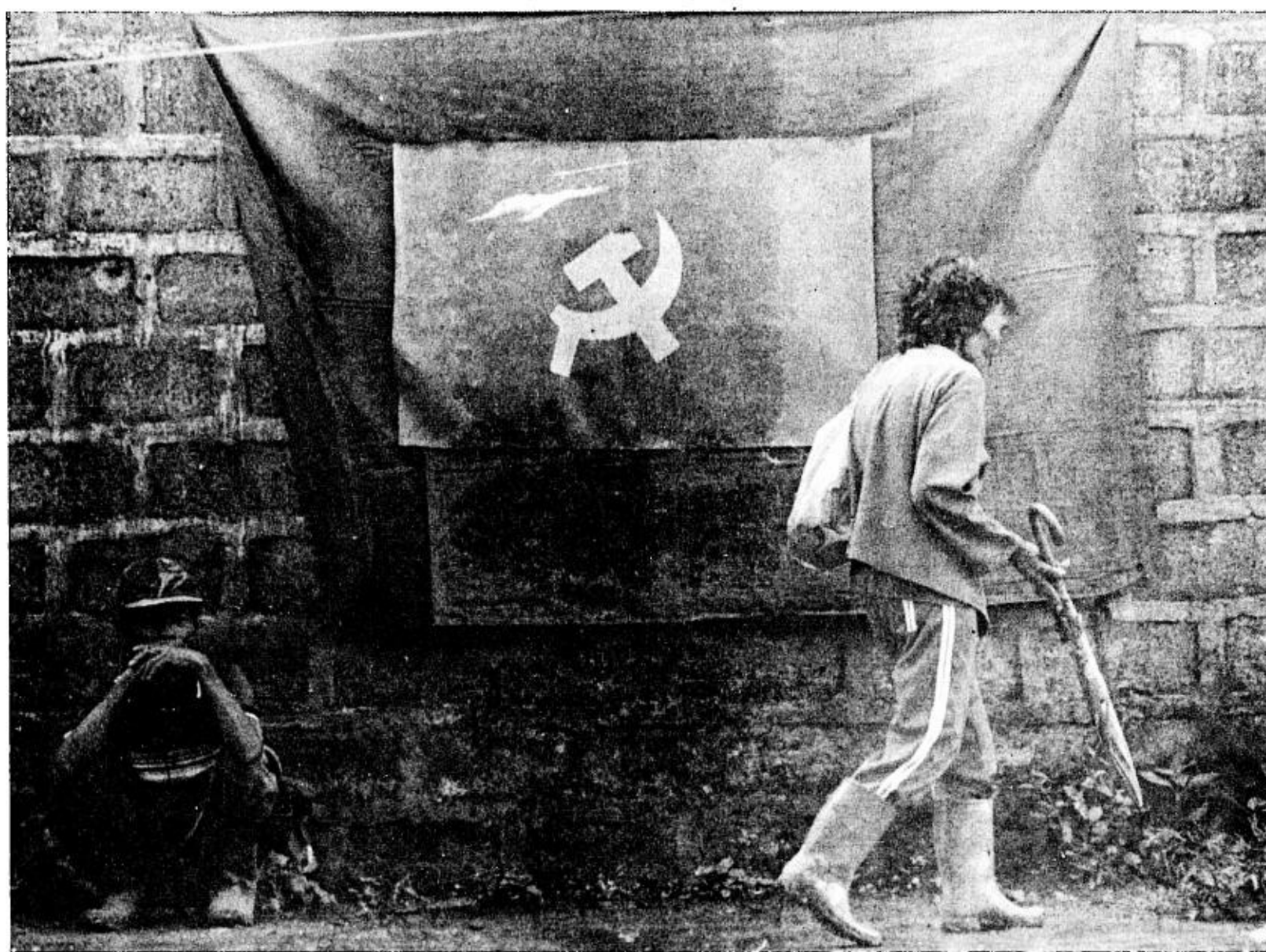
During the attack, the rebels burned seven vehicles owned by the Reyes family—including two 10-wheel dump trucks, a fire truck, a tractor and a backhoe.

The report also said the NPA also burned a 10-wheel dump truck owned by the municipal government of San Narciso.

Alejandrino said the rebels just walked away after the raid because they also burned the truck that they used for the raid.

"The security group of the Reyeses did not put up a fight," said Alejandrino. No firearms were taken from the hacienda guards.

When pressed to comment on whether he thinks the attack on the hacienda could



THE HAMMER and sickle, here displayed in a town at the foot of the Sierra Madre mountain ranges in 1997, continues to wield its influence on a now fractious underground rebel force that draws nourishment from inequality and injustice. *FILE PHOTO*

be linked to the bombings in Metro Manila, Alejandrino simply said police were still investigating its possibility.

"There is nothing definite yet," he said.

Alejandrino said no casualty was reported during the guerrillas' assault on the estate.

He said the guerrillas went on a burning spree, setting afire any vehicle in sight inside the hacienda.

"The charred vehicles were found in different locations in the hacienda," the police chief said.

Victor Reyes, mayor of San Narciso, is a son of Domingo Reyes, a landlord who became controversial in Quezon for resisting land reform. The elder Domingo also owns a shipping line.

Domingo, a former mayor of San Narciso, owns huge tracts of land in the province and the Ocean Palace Mall, the biggest shopping mall in Lucena City.

He also owns the Viva Shipping Lines that ply the Marinduque-Lucena City and the Batangas City-Mindoro routes.

In September 1998, a team of Department of Agrarian Reform officials,

heavily escorted by armed soldiers and policemen, forced their way into the vast tract of land of the Reyeses in Barangay Catulin in the nearby Buenavista town.

The government team enforced a department ruling that the eviction of 55 peasants who used to farm 174 hectares in the Reyes estate was illegal.

The attack on the Reyes hacienda was the latest in a string of offensives conducted by the NPA since it refused to declare a ceasefire in keeping with the holiday season.

In early December, communist gue-

rillas raided the town of Agdangan and ambushed a patrol team in General Nakar, killing two policemen.

The rebels also killed a retired police officer in Tiaong, Quezon.

Alejandrino said additional policemen sent to the two power plants were just meant to reinforce existing security forces in the areas.

"The security provided by a private firm at the plants is very elaborate. It is simply hard for any lawless element to (disrupt the plants') operations," he said.

Lack of iodine hounds Davao City kids

DAVAO CITY—Iodine and iron deficiency are hounding most of the children here despite the city's relatively high level of development compared to other areas in the country.

Dr. Glen Maberly, a consultant of the US-based Program Against Micro-nutrient Malnutrition of the United Nations Children's Fund, said about 70 percent of the city's pregnant women and children aged below 2 years old are suffering from iodine deficiency and lack of Vitamin A.

Maberly said nationwide, Unicef estimated that 40 percent of children and pregnant women have iodine deficiency problems.

He said iodine deficiency in the hinterlands of the city may even be worse.

While there are still no stud-

ies made on this matter, based on the Unicef observation, people, particularly those in the hinterlands, have barely any access to markets where they can buy salt, he explained.

A Unicef document, titled "Ending Iodine Deficiency Forever," noted that the problem is serious especially among pregnant women and young children.

The document said even mild iodine deficiencies among pregnant women could also affect the development of their unborn babies or cause possible physical and mental retardation of their unborn children.

The Unicef said iodine deficiency could also affect individual intelligence and lower the average intelligence quotient of a population by as much as 13 points.

"The high costs associated with

treating goiter, brain damage and cretinism are surpassed by the unquantifiable social and economic losses that result when generations are marked by diminished mental and physical capacities," the Unicef said.

But the Unicef said iodine deficiency is "remarkably simple to treat," noting that "the simple process of iodizing salt can eliminate iodine deficiency."

Maberly, however, said the number of households consuming iodized salt in the country remains low despite the passage of the Salt Law, a policy requiring that salt sold in markets to be iodized and processed food fortified with iodine.

The Unicef noted that only 15 percent of all households nationwide consume iodized salt.

He said the city lacks access to iodized salt as it imports 80 percent

of its salt from as far as China and India. Davao City does not produce its own salt.

The city government, in partnership with the Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other nongovernment organizations, has embarked on a campaign that would bring down the cost of iodized salt.

Both the government and the private sector also vowed to campaign for the replacement of common salt sold in markets here with iodized salt and for processed food to be fortified with iodine.

The city government also plans to hold a citywide salt summit to discuss the iodine deficiency problem and measures that may be taken to address it. *Jowel F. Canuday, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Group defies odds to help children with heart diseases

BY GOBLETH MOULIC
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—A 3-year-old boy from Cagayan who has a congenital heart disease is celebrating the New Year with a newly mended heart and a new lease on life.

Three other babies in Metro Manila and Tuba, Benguet, are hoping to live normal lives as they are expected to undergo major heart operations this March.

These are the children whom the Children's Heart Foundation (CHF) has been assisting after the successful heart surgery of Danica Jimeno, Baguio's "heart baby."

The CHF is a non-profit organization formed in July 2000 by various donors who shouldered the medical and hospital expenses of Danica at the Tulane University Medical Center in New Orleans in 1999.

Like Danica, 3-year-old Ariel Lappay of Tuguegarao City is now leading a normal life after Dr. Serafin de Leon, a noted Filipino pediatric cardiologist based in New Orleans, performed the surgery on him two months ago.

A year after he patched the hole in Danica's heart, De Leon arrived in the country in October to conduct open-heart surgery on at least 30 children, including Lappay.

De Leon said Lappay, whom he described as a "blue baby," would have died of complications without the timely intervention of the CHF members who actively lobbied for the boy's immediate surgery.

The boy was initially not included in the list of patients scheduled for operation at the Philippine Heart Center (PHC) in Quezon City.

Besides, Lappay's parents lack money to pay for their son's hospital bills and medicines. Worse, the boy's father, an Army soldier, could not provide financial and moral support to his ailing son as he was in combat duty in Mindanao.

The CHF then sought the assistance of Dr. Wilberto Lopez, former chair of the department of pediatrics at the PHC, to intercede so the boy would be scheduled for the operation and be accommodated in the hospital.

When Lopez, along with CHF officials, presented Lappay to De Leon, the doctor generously waived his professional fee and ordered PHC personnel to prepare the operating room immediately to save the "blue baby."

"Naisig itong ang bata (The child was accommodated) because of his delicate condition. Now the baby is doing very well in the recovery room," De Leon told the INQUIRER a day after Lappay's surgery on Oct. 7.

From a "blue baby" to a "pink baby," Lappay is now a picture of a happy and normal boy when he celebrated the holidays with his family in Tuguegarao City.

If plans would push through, the medical woes of three more babies, who belong to indigent families, would be over when De Leon fulfills his promise to return to the country three months from now to perform the operations.

These babies are Mitzi Ryeel Sicay, 2, of Tuba, Benguet; Kriha Diolito, 1, of Pampanga City; and Noel Mendoza Jr., 1, of Pateros, Rizal.

CHF president Alvin Murriel said the foundation has shouldered most of the medical bills of the three babies while they waited for their operations.

Although the five-month-old foundation wants to reach out to more children with congenital heart ailments, the CHF is limited to helping one baby at a time due to lack of funds.

"We are doing our best to pool additional funds to see these children through. That's why we encourage compassionate individuals to share some of their blessings with the heart patients," he said.

Despite the economic crisis the country is experiencing, Murriel is optimistic that 2001 would bring hope and comfort to more children with heart diseases.

"We are planning to launch various fund-raising drives starting January 2001. In fact, we have received pledges from different businessmen (and individuals) for this endeavor," he said.

For those interested to donate to the group, the CHF may be contacted through its president, Alvin Murriel, at e-mail bigben_m@edsamail.com.ph or through the Inquirer Northern Luzon Bureau at phone (074) 442-3539.

EXCESSIVE RATES**Baguio gov't replaces protested tax code**

BAGUIO CITY—The city government finally replaced a controversial 1995 tax ordinance, which a local judge has declared unconstitutional.

Ordinance 95-001, a five-year-old measure that raised property and commercial taxes by 600 to 1,200 percent, was automatically amended by a still unnumbered ordinance, approved recently by the council and endorsed last week by Mayor Mauricio Domogan.

The new tax Ordinance 2000-001 scales down the tax schedules imposed by Ordinance 95-001 to a uniform 10-percent increase based on a 1973 tax ordinance.

Ordinance 95-001 led to a civil disobedience campaign by local businessmen, consumers and even Manila-based real property owners, who were outraged by the increase. The same group later sued the city.

Judge Antonio Reyes of the regional trial court here eventually ruled that Ordinance 95-001 had not gone through publication requirements and had therefore violated civic rights assuring prior consultations before any law is passed.

Local businessmen said the city council's political fate rested on its commitment to recall or amend the ordinance by yearend and not on its stand on whether President Estrada should be convicted or acquitted by the impeachment court now trying him for corruption and other charges.

A Chinese-Filipino businessman told the INQUIRER that the council devoted more time debating on its version of an "Estrada resign" resolution when more time should have been given to the tax code "because it affects everyone."

The new tax ordinance had been pending before the council since October.

Councilor Betty Lourdes Tabanda lobbied for the code's approval this month, fearing that a delayed legislation would make Ordinance 2000-001 effective only in April.

Tax ordinances take effect only in the quarter following their approval.

Tabanda told the INQUIRER that she was more concerned about the new code's publication for which the old tax ordinance was condemned by the court.

"If this ordinance is not published on time, it won't make it in January when majority of commercial business taxes are collected," she said.

But she pointed out that the new code was far from ideal.

Tabanda said the council realized far too late that the new ordinance adopted a routine property valuation schedule that describes such profitable institutions as Camp John Hay and the Baguio Country Club as "residential" pieces of property.

More rational taxes

Lawyer Teofisto Rondez, counsel for a businessman's collective suit that contested Ordinance 95-001 in court, said rate residents and "even Manila-based owners of corporate (pieces) of property and summerhouses here" expected more rational taxes next year.

He said Reyes had already directed the city government to reimburse residents the excess in their 1998, 1999 and 2000 tax payments, which could amount to about P25 billion.

The city government had appealed Reyes' decision before the Court of

Appeals (CA), but a subsequent deal with businessmen here sought their withdrawal from the suit in exchange for a new compromise tax measure.

Rondez said the city government had more at stake in drawing up the new tax code.

"People are waiting for the CA to issue a ruling. They (the city government) would not want to be overtaken by the CA, so they should have been rushing a new measure," Rondez told the INQUIRER.

He said a drastic reimbursement scheme would widen the city's spending deficits.

By comparison, the city loses P10 to P15 million when it applies the new tax measure, slightly altering the projected 2001 city budget to P502 million.

City Treasurer Thelma Manaois said the new code simply adjusted taxes for higher-income brackets.

"Under this new code, lower-income brackets still pay the same rate they paid in 1973 because their tax rates are just 10 percent higher," Manaois said. *Vincent Cabreja, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

New Year's Eve revelry subdued

(From page A1)

"There are really fewer injuries this year compared to last year. It seems people would rather buy food to eat than spend their money on firecrackers," said Dr. Cecilio Vivo, the physician in charge at the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center (JRMMC) on New Year's Eve.

Health Secretary Alfredo Romualdez also noted the low overall number of firecracker casualties.

"This could also be attributed to the effectiveness of the DOH's 'Iwas Paputok' campaign against firecrackers," Romualdez said.

Carmencita Banatin, who heads the Stop Death firecracker education program, agreed that the campaign helped reduce injuries.

But she also said Filipinos had less money for fireworks after a year that dampened moods and emptied pocketbooks.

Long way off

This year's injury figures were a long way from the more than 600 revelry-related injuries reported from all over the country last year.

According to DOH statistics, the number of people hurt during past New Year's Eve merrymaking reached as high as 1,000 a few years ago.

On Saturday, the government-run JRMMC received more than 50



TOGETHERNESS is what New Year's day is all about for Filipino families.

JOAN BONDOC

emergency patients, including children, who were injured in the bomb explosion inside a Light Rail Trans-

it coach at the Blumentritt station. The explosion was one of five that tore through the capital Satur-

day, killing 14 and injuring more than 100.

But the hospital monitored only

45 cases of firecracker blast injuries yesterday morning.

A slight drizzle over most of Metro Manila and a rain storm in the Visayas were also acknowledged as factors that contributed to the low number of revelry-related injuries in the first year of the 21st century.

As a result of last night's smoke from the firecracker explosions and the drizzle, zero visibility was reported in Metro Manila just after midnight yesterday.

Romualdez issued an advisory warning that the dense haze that hung over Metro Manila after the New Year's Eve revelry was particularly hazardous to people afflicted with asthma and other respiratory diseases.

He said they should stay indoors or breathe through surgical masks for up to two days.

Hospital count

In Metro Manila, more than 100 people were reported injured in the revelry, whether in firecracker explosions and other incidents.

The following hospitals reported these figures as of 10 a.m.: JRMMC, 45 victims; Philippine General Hospital, 19; Pasay City General Hospital, 18; Tondo General Hospital, 11; Ospital ng Makati, 10; Las Piñas District Hospital, 10.

East Avenue Medical Center, 11 victims; Quezon City General Hospital, eight; MCU, five; Pagamutan

ng Malabon, two; Makati Medical Center, two; Fatima Medical Center, two; and Mandaluyong Medical Center, two.

Dave Gamboa, a doctor at the Philippine General Hospital, said his acute care unit received 23 cases of firecracker blast and eye injuries yesterday morning, down by almost half from a year ago.

Less to celebrate

A series of setbacks and natural disasters—including a weakened peso, a war in certain parts of Mindanao, and typhoons and floods—left Filipinos with less to celebrate and little money for fireworks.

The normally frenzied New Year's Eve parties were also dampened by the political crisis triggered by the "Juetengate" scandal that led to President Estrada's impeachment trial.

Even the President broke with his tradition this year.

Quoting a statement issued by Malacañang, the Associated Press said Mr. Estrada quietly welcomed the New Year at his residence in Greenhills, San Juan, instead of attending a party at the Manila Hotel.

A presidential adviser, who asked not to be named, said Mr. Estrada avoided the Manila Hotel because of security concerns. *With an AP report*

Pope calls for peace in the Middle East

(From page A1)

his envoy in the Holy Land had given Israeli and Palestinian authorities a copy of his message for the World Day of Peace, celebrated on Jan. 1.

"All should try to promote a culture of real solidarity and of justice that is intricately linked to the value of peace, which is the primary objective for every society and (necessary) for national and international co-existence," he said.

"This is even more necessary in the current world context, made complex by widespread human mobility, global communications and the often difficult encounters between different cultures."

Wearing gold and white vestments and looking good on a bracing day under a clear sky, the Pope prayed for peace in the Holy Land marked by mutual respect among Jews, Moslems and Christians.

Dialogue between cultures was the theme of the Pope's 21-page World Day of Peace message, which was issued on Dec. 12 and sent to heads of state and govern-

ment and to international organizations.

New Year's Eve

The Pope, bundled up in a red cloak on a blustery cold Roman night, earlier made a midnight New Year's Eve appearance to a prayerful, cheering crowd at St. Peter's Square.

The 80-year-old Pope, looking and sounding quite tired, appeared at the window of his studio overlooking the square about five minutes past midnight.

"If we let ourselves be drawn by His love then the paths of life will know the joy that springs forth from serving Him faithfully every day," the Roman Catholic leader said on the top floor of the Vatican's Apostolic Palace.

"This is the cordial wish that I make for all believers and for every man and woman of good will," he said as fireworks exploded over the hills of Rome in stark contrast to the religious atmosphere at the square.

Tens of thousands had been waiting for him for some two hours as

they held a kind of pep rally with prayer and song and clutched candles, setting the square aglow in shimmering light.

"I wish that the new millennium brings to all nations, peace, justice, brotherhood and prosperity," the Pope said without naming any countries.

"In particular, my thoughts go to the young people, the hope of the future," he added, praying that God "give sense to their existence."

The youths then interrupted his speech with cheers, which the Pope acknowledged with a smile and a little wave of his hand.

He urged the faithful "to reflect on the dramas and hopes, joys and suffering, victories and defeats the past century and past millennium."

More fraternal

John Paul prayed that "humanity, which anxiously advances in the new millennium, (be) ever more fraternal and in solidarity."

As soon as the Pope went inside, many in the crowd set off firecrackers or popped upon bottles of bubbly wine and exchanged kisses.

This year's New Year's Eve crowd in the square was less than half the size of the one that rang out the millennium a year ago, when some 120,000 people turned out for what was then the Pope's first-ever midnight New Year's Eve appearance.

Temperatures hovering in the single-digits Celsius discouraged some faithful from turning out. But those who did donned hats and gloves and kept singing and holding prayer books in the square.

"It's a marvelous thing," said Luigi Migot, a 40-year-old from northern Italy when asked why he wanted to be in the square at the stroke of midnight to hear the Pope. "It fills you with hope and even the cold gives you a sense of well-being," he said.

The New Year's Day Mass in St. Peter's Square was one of the last few main events of the Vatican's Holy Year that has so far drawn some 25 million pilgrims to Rome. The Holy Year ends on Jan. 6.

Reuters and AP



IN GOOD times and bad, sister Emmalyn can lean on kid brother's shoulder.

Top Boy Scout...

(From page A1)

jamboree will be held from Jan. 3 to 13.

Filipino scouting officials say they will likely rely on the Australian press to spread the story of his search—a search that equally belongs to his older sister Emmalyn, who gave up a scholarship at the Ateneo so that her brother would not have to be alone.

A top contender for valedictorian in his 2001 graduating class, Robin has the sort of soap-opera star good looks that charm teenyboppers. But life has been anything but glamorous for the boy.

Robin was born in 1984 in Baguio City. His father Rupert, an agronomist, was assigned to the Philippines as a consultant with the World Bank. Not long after arriving here, he met Emma Dones, a native of Sorsogon, who bore him a daughter named Emmalyn, now 20, and Robin.

Life for the couple included some work-related overseas travel, including a trip to Rome with their one-year-old daughter. Unfortunately, the union eventually crumbled. By Robin's recollection, his father left the family when he was 3 years old. Emma and her children never heard from him again.

Unable to fully support her two small children, their mother sent them to live with their grandparents in Bacon, Sorsogon. She currently works with a family in Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

Through it all, Robin and Emmalyn have coped remarkably. Robin, a high school senior, is student council president at the St. Louis de Marellac College in Sorsogon. He lives in a boarding house whose owner, a municipal councilor, has waived the monthly rent for him.

Emmalyn

Emmalyn, also an honor student, is a college junior majoring in education. She goes to the same school as her brother, which is run by the Daughters of Charity, a French religious congregation of missionary nuns.

Two years ago, Emmalyn was a freshman scholar at the Ateneo de Manila University, where she had a partial (50 percent) scholarship.

But after her first semester, with her scholarship about to be up-

graded to 100 percent, the girl made a painful decision. Emmalyn missed her younger brother terribly and felt that he needed her as he grew up in Sorsogon.

Giving up a scholarship in one of the country's best universities was a painful decision, but Emmalyn did not quail. She returned to St. Louis de Marellac College and found a part-time job in a video rental shop to help pay for living expenses.

Scholarship

What saved the day for the struggling siblings was Robin's selection in November as one of the Ten Outstanding Boy Scouts of the Philippines. Winners of this annual event receive cash prizes, trophies and, most importantly, a college scholarship from Coca-Cola, the sponsor of the selection process.

The boys are selected from all over country on the basis of school and community leadership, academic excellence, moral conduct and achievement in the scouting movement.

Robin had already achieved Eagle Scout status, the highest rank.

He has been active in many environmental community projects, including a garbage collection and segregation scheme, garbage pit construction and tree planting. Robin was also involved in a community street-lighting project.

He was chosen one of the year's Ten Outstanding Boy Scouts among 3.5 million Filipino scouts, one of the largest populations of scouts in the world.

20 countries

More recently, he was chosen to be a member of the 25-member Philippine delegation to the Asia-Pacific Scouting Jamboree in New South Wales, some 80 kilometers southeast of Sydney. He is the only scout in the contingent sponsored by the Boy Scouts Foundation of the Philippines.

The jamboree, a gathering of boy scouts from some 20 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, is held every four years.

Ironically, Robin's sister was the first reason for his involvement in the scouting movement. "Emmalyn was a Girl Scout even before I went to school," Robin said. "I would look at her in her uniform, and at that age I already knew that I wanted to join the Boy Scouts."

In the end, he got more than a uniform. He gained self-esteem.

And although no one is saying that Robin will have no more battles to face and overcome, the young man is full of hope and resolve. Right now he is focused on the prospect of his approaching life in college, a thought he relishes.

Sci-fi guru says wigs wave of the future

(From page A1)

even more amazing and prophesied that computer keyboards and voice recognition software may be replaced by "brain caps."

In an article published in the Sunday Observer, Clarke wrote: "It seems obvious that the ultimate input-output device would bypass all the body's sense organs and pass its signals directly into the brain."

"Exactly how this (brain cap) will be done I leave to biotechnicians to decide... one feature that might delay its general adoption is that the wearer would probably have to be completely bald to use the tightly fitting helmet."

Thus, his prediction that wigs could become a wave of the future.

Clarke, who predicted the establishment of geo-stationary satellites 55 years ago, said many thought he was "really taking things too far" by proposing a computer capable of a high-level of artificial intelligence such as the "HAL" computer, the star of "2001."

"I have to say that my most obvious error was that of underestimating the extent to which miniaturization would overtake the computer industry."

The last century had shown that it was technically possible to achieve whatever people wished to in the field of communications.

"The only limitations are financial, legal and political," said the author who turned 83 last month.

"The information age offers much to mankind, and I would like to think that we will rise to the challenges it presents," he said.

"But it is vital to remember that information in the sense of raw data is not knowledge. That knowledge is not wisdom; and that wisdom is not foresight. But information is the first essential step to all of these."

More amazing

With the expansion of the Internet and other developments, Clarke said the new millennium would be more amazing than the last.

"There are many people who are genuinely alarmed by the immense amounts of information available to us through the ever-expanding Internet," he said.

"To them, I can offer little consolation other than to suggest that they put themselves in the place of their ancestors at the time of the invention of the printing press."

"My God," they cried. "Now there could be



SCI-FI writer Arthur Clarke in his home in the Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, on New Year's Eve which he calls the eve of the "real" millennium.

as many as a thousand books. How will we read them all?" Strangely, as history has shown, our species survived that earlier deluge and some say even advanced because of it.

"The very existence of a myriad of new information channels, operating in real time and across all frontiers, will be a powerful influence on civilized behavior."

"What I am saying in fact, is that the debate about the free flow of information which has been going on for so many years will soon be settled by engineers, not politicians."

"Just as the physicists, not generals, have now determined the nature of war."

Real beginning

Clarke, who has lived in Sri Lanka since 1956 and has more than 80 books to his credit, also maintained 2001 marked the "real beginning of the third millennium" but said in a statement issued Wednesday that dates did not matter.

"We should be less concerned about adding years to life, and more about adding life to years," he said.

Clarke said he never patented his idea of geo-stationary communications satellites because he

did not think it would be realized during his lifetime.

Clarke also lamented that the 20th century had also been one of the most savage as he urged the world to shed some of its cruel customs.

"Slavery, torture, racial and religious persecution, treatment of women as chattels, mutilation of children because of ancient superstition, cruelty to animals—the list is endless and no country can claim total innocence," he said.

Clarke himself has been accused of abusing children in Sri Lanka. When he was honored with knighthood in 1998, he asked for the investiture ceremony to be postponed until he was cleared of charges of pedophilia.

In May last year, he was presented with the "award of Knight Bachelor" by the British High Commissioner Linda Duffield at a ceremony in the capital Colombo.

Clarke is affected by post-polio syndrome and suffers from hearing difficulties.

He was born in Minehead, England, in 1917 but lives in Sri Lanka, which has honored him by naming a science institute after him and making him chancellor of a university. **AFP**

Tergat bags 5th Silvester win

SAO PAULO, Brazil—Paul Tergat of Kenya won a record fifth St. Silvester road race on Sunday, easing away from Ethiopians Tesfaye Tola and Tesfaye Jifar at Sao Paulo's annual year-end event. The 31-year-old Tergat's win followed an earlier sweep of the top three spots by Kenyans in the women's race, which was won by Lydia Cheromei. AP

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Millennium race reels off

BARCELONA, Spain—Five giant catamarans set off Sunday from this northeastern Spanish city in a nonstop race around the world—an extreme sailing competition that aims to break the world record for circumnavigation. The Millennium Race is a no-holds barred, first one-to-cross-the-finish-line-wins challenge involving the most expensive and technologically advanced catamarans ever constructed. AP

BAP TUG-OF-WAR

Board to decide Puyat election

BY JUNE NAVARRO

DISLODGED basketball chief Freddie Jalasco vowed to give up the fight in the tug-of-war for the Basketball Association of Philippines' top post once the "legitimate" board of directors shows up and calls for an election in their executive board meeting tentatively slated on Jan. 6.

Ousted by a majority vote in an election he described as illegal, Jalasco said his sudden change of heart was fueled by his sincere quest for peace and harmony within the BAP.

"If they don't want me, I'm willing to step down for the sake of the sport," said Jalasco. "I don't want to be a stumbling block to the development of the sport."

Jalasco added he already discussed the issue with basketball chair Lito "Gonzalo" Puyat II, whom he quoted as amenable to his earlier pronouncement of upholding the constitution by way of an election called by the BAP

president (Jalasco).

Puyat was elected BAP president in absentia on Dec. 22.

Since his election, Puyat has not issued any statement to clarify his position.

Jalasco had earlier stated he would fight Puyat's election.

Jalasco said that the decision to oust him should come from the legitimate members of the BAP and not from what he termed as "mere surrogates," who represented most of the directors during the hastily called election on Dec. 22.

"There's no provision in the BAP's constitution and by-laws allowing



JALASCO



PUYAT

proxy-voting. Thus, the election was illegal," said Jalasco.

He cited the case of Antonio Angeles, the BAP's newly

elected chair, who was seriously ill and bed-ridden at the Angeles University Foundation Hospital in Angeles City when the election was supposedly held.

PSC Commissioner William Ramirez told the INQUIRER that he had talked with Dr. Manny Angeles, Angeles' brother, who confirmed the former BAP vice president for Region III was indeed confined in the hospital due to various ailments.

Jalasco noted "proxies" could not amend the constitution since they do not know the real issues behind the BAP's internal squabble.

The 22-man BAP board, which was represented during the meeting except for the Cordillera Autonomous Region director, called for a snap election and declared the position of secretary general as elective, a direct violation of the BAP rules, Jalasco said.

"They cannot amend the charter overnight," he said.

Jalasco brought the issue to the attention of the PSC and the Philippine Olympic Committee.

Olympic chief Celso Dayrit had earlier appointed Jalasco chief de mission of the Philippine delegation to the Southeast Asian Games this year in Kuala Lumpur.

"Mr. Dayrit told me that I was chosen as SEA Games chief of mission in my capacity as POC council member and not as president of the BAP," said Jalasco.

PBL financially stable, says Sy

BY DENNIS U. EROA

IF THE Philippine Basketball League is one big party, then the guests are now dancing to the sound of upbeat music.

After the changing of the guards at the start of the year, the league, which is now on its 17th year, became mute witness to a flurry of activities.

While the country reels from the topsy-turvy economy, the PBL and its legion of fans are having the time of their lives.

Dioceldo Sy, known for his ability to thrive on challenges, replaced Robert Kuan at the helm as board chair last Feb-

ruary. Chino Trinidad abandoned his broadcasting job to fill in the shoes vacated by commissioner Yeng Guiao.

Welcoat Paints, despite its not-so-happy bid to make the PBA, emerged as the league's new powerhouse. It won the Chairman's Cup held in honor of Sy, stretching its winning skein to three conferences.

Solidly backed by the board, Sy and Trinidad were on the hunt to add more fizz and respectability to the league.

They established the PYBL as an appetizer to the main dish.

Despite a shaky start, the PBL was able to ink a long-term contract with

PTV-4, assuring the league of nationwide coverage. Also, the PBL signed an MOA with the PBA and the MBA, while tying up with groups including the Habitat for Humanity as part of its social commitment.

By bringing in the fabled La Salle-Ateneo rivalry to the Makati Coliseum, the PBL was assured of shrieking, youthful and passionate fans.

Exciting players from the collegiate ranks and the talent-rich Visayas-Mindanao cage scene likewise drew their own followers.

Trinidad also contributed greatly in improving officiating.

Sy is also busy with offcourt matters. He focused on improving the financial status of the league and in a show of boundless faith even upped the franchise fee to P2M for the coming season.

"Of all the new changes we instituted, I am proud that our league's financial status is stable," Sy said.

PharmaQuick and Osaka Iridology became the PBL's newest members in 2000. Hapee Toothpaste returned, joining Welcoat, Shark, Anna Freezer, Blu Sun Power and Montaña Jewels as regulars. Ateneo-Pioneer is presently a guest team.



HOPMAN CUP

US star Monica Seles hits a shot against Slovakian Karina Habsudova during their Hopman Cup match in Perth, Australia, Monday. Seles won, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1. Seles' teammate Jan-Michael Gambill beat Dominik Hrbaty, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4, to clinch the tie for the Americans. AP

Janus

IN HIS New Year homily, the priest in our village began by saying, "I had been delivering sermons since Dec. 16, the first day of Simbang Gabi. Sawa na siguro kayo. For a change, and since we're into the first month of the year anyway, let me tell you about the origin of January."

He said the month of January came from the word Janus.

"He was a man with one head that had two faces, one in front and the other at the back," he said.

He went on to say that the "back face" could be likened to the past year and the "front face" the coming year.

He said the "back face" can look back at the past and the "front face" can look at the future.

"If you sinned in 2000," he said, "ask for forgiveness and lead a clean life in 2001."

"If you did good in 2000," he said, "try to do better in 2001."

Well done, father.

Let me now translate the Janus myth to sports.

Johnny Abarrientos didn't do well in 2000. He was widely known as having wantonly indulged in cockfighting. By spending nights in cockpits, his health suffered because of lack of sleep. Naturally, his game dipped to an alarming low. Thus, I wouldn't blame Tim Cone for kicking Abarrientos out of Alaska.

But Abarrientos should not sulk. He is not old hat. The spring in his legs is still capable of giving him quality games in the years to come.

Johnny's transfer was a new leash on life for the 1996 MVP. Following his sudden shipment to Pop Cola from Alaska, the Flying A should look forward to recovering his crown as the country's premiere point guard. As I keep saying it here, the best coach is the player himself. Tim is definitely one of the finest coaches the land has ever produced. But his genius amounts to nothing if his players will not listen.

Discipline. The will to recapture that old flame. Only Johnny can do both. No coach, not even Phil Jackson, can do that for him.

I'm also looking forward to heeding our priest's advice as, after looking back to 2000, I saw that my best was not enough for me to win the lotto.

But then, on second thought, do we really need skill to win a lotto jackpot?

Nah. Luck is all you need to hit it big when it comes to the million-peso numbers game.

When will the waiting end for the return of Juliet?

Make that legal finally, please. Or I'll go cockfighting instead. With Janus as my idol, I won't lose sleep at the cockpit.

Two faces are always better than one.

SPECTATOR



Al S. Mendoza

Bulls hand Nets 7th consecutive setback

CHICAGO — Elton Brand scored 31 points and had a season-high 16 rebounds in the NBA Sunday as the Chicago Bulls beat New Jersey 86-77, the Nets' seventh straight loss.

New Jersey's Stephen Marbury, averaging 25 points a game, scored 18 on 5-of-19 shooting. Aaron Williams added 16 points and 14 rebounds before fouling out.

Ron Mercer scored 18 for the Bulls, who won for only the fifth time in 30 games.

Brand's thundering dunk on a nifty pass from Bryce Drew gave the Bulls a 59-44 lead late in the third quarter and Chicago appeared on its way to a rare blowout.

But the Nets put together a 10-0 run bridging the third and fourth quarters that made it 59-54. Brad Miller's only basket of the game and Brand's follow put the Bulls back up by nine, but Williams got inside for two baskets and Sherman Douglas scored as the Nets got to 65-62.

Mercer made two baskets and Ron Artest con-

verted a three-point play allowing the Bulls to increase their lead to eight.

Wizards 110, Pistons 96
In Washington, Chris Whitney, getting his third consecutive start while the frustrated Rod Strickland sat in street clothes, led a 12-0 third-quarter run as Washington beat Detroit.

Whitney finished with 13 points and five assists, and Juwan Howard had a season-high 35 points for the Wizards, who had lost six straight and 15 of 16 overall. AP

Hakeem has cyst on knee

HOUSTON — Houston Rockets center Hakeem Olajuwon will rest for at least a couple days because of a cyst on his right knee. Olajuwon has had swelling in the knee since falling hard in a NBA game against the Los Angeles Lakers on Dec. 21. AP

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUAT

BASKETBALL: Chinese National Basketball League at 3:30 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

NBA - Chicago Bulls vs New York Knicks at 5 p.m. (r) on ESPN

ICE SKATING: Sparkassen Cup on Ice 2000 Highlights #2 at 10 a.m. (r - 6 p.m.) on Star Sports

Katarina Witt's Divas On Ice 2000 at 8:30 p.m. on ESPN

BILLIARDS: World Professional Pool Championships 2000, Day 8, Quarterfinals, 2nd Session at 10:30 p.m. (r) on ESPN

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: Super Bowl VII Highlights - Miami Dolphins vs Washington Redskins at 7 a.m. (r), Super Bowl VIII Highlights - Miami vs Minnesota Vikings at 4 p.m. (r) on ESPN

2000 AXA Liberty Bowl at 10 a.m. (r) on ESPN

GOLF: The 2000 Straits Cup, Day Two Highlights at 8 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

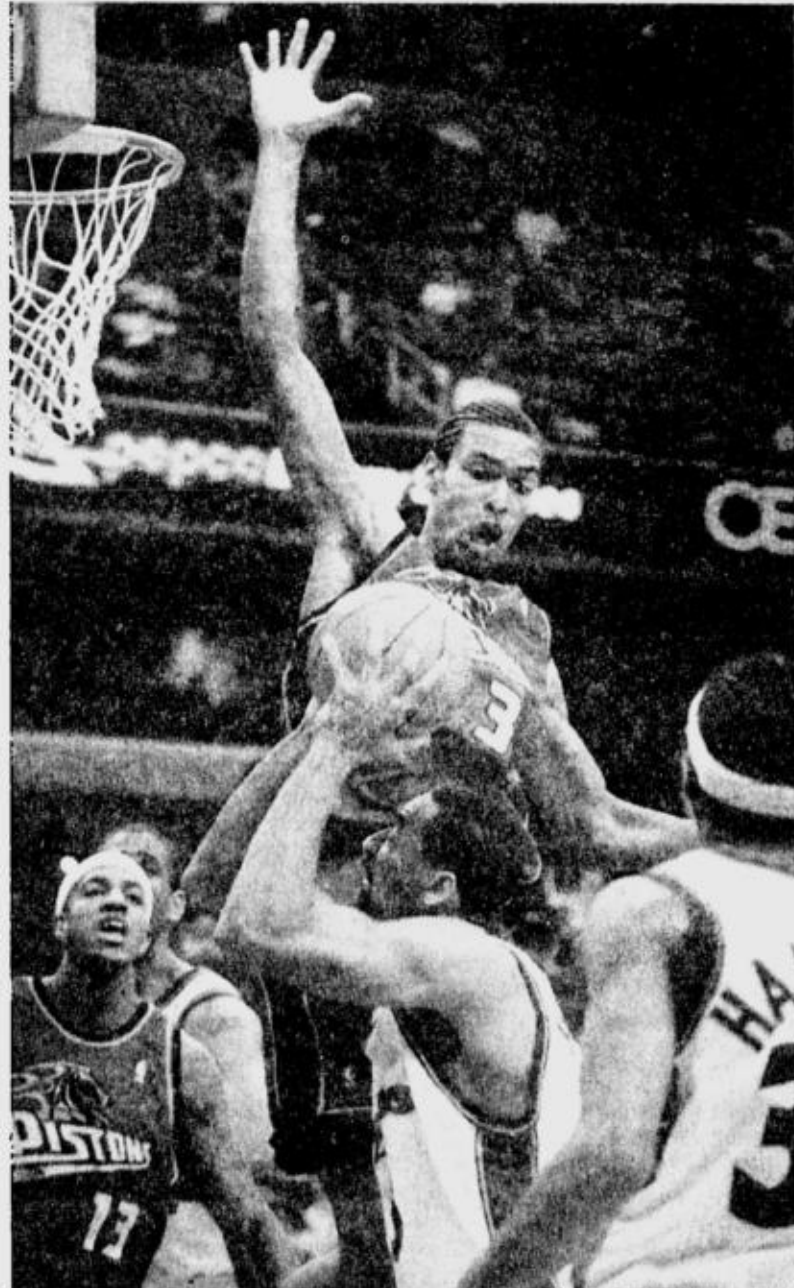
HORSE RACING: Racehorse Digest at 8 a.m. (r) on ESPN

TRIATHLON: Laguna Phuket Triathlon 2000 Highlights at 2 p.m. (r) on ESPN

MOTOR SPORTS: The Michelin Race of Champions 2000 Highlights at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

Motoworld at 4:30 p.m. on ESPN

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.



DETROIT'S Ben Wallace soars as he tries to stop a shot by Washington's Juwan Howard. Looking on are Jerome Williams of Detroit (13) and Richard Hamilton of Washington. AP

Russian skaters top attractions in Araneta show

ALEXEI Kiliakov and Inna Volianskaia are not only the top attractions in the current Disney-on-Ice Little Mermaid now performing at the Araneta Coliseum until Jan. 7, 2001.

They are also Russia's pride in figure skating, having competed for their country in world competitions.

Alexei, who has the commanding presence in the Little Mermaid, is tall and athletic on the ice and portrays Prince Eric, who uses his figure skating training with great style in his pair routines with Inna who plays Ariel.

The audience at the Big Dome is mesmerized by the romance and adventures of Eric and Ariel through the dynamic skating of Alexei and Inna without so much realizing they are watching a pair of veteran Olympic competitors.

Alexei, for one, skated with two different partners before and trained under the watchful eyes of prestigious Olympic Russian coach Ludmila Pakhomova and Olympian champion Natalia Linichuk.

He attended the Physical University in Moscow and supplemented his studies with dance classes on ballet, jazz, modern and ballroom. He also enjoyed football, hockey, chess and bicycling.

After a successful amateur career, Alexei decided to turn pro and since has

toured Europe and later entertained audiences in England.

On ice, Inna brings Ariel, the world's favorite mermaid, to life with grace and beauty in each performance of the Little Mermaid. With her red hair flowing and her beautiful mermaid tail glistening in the spotlight, she 'swims' across the frozen surface with aplomb. One moment she is an innocent adolescent playing with her friends Flounder and Scuttle and the next, an independent young woman who confronts Ursula the Sea Witch and longs for a life on land.

For 10 years, Inna was a featured skater who has traveled throughout Europe and America. She has also performed regularly in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada and England with Olympic champions Torvill and Dean between 1988 and 1998.

Three others—Kelly Marshall, Luke Craig, and Richard Stringer—did various stunts with their national teams.

They perform daily at the Big Dome of the Araneta Coliseum enthralling Filipinos of all ages.

Aside from the musical feast of the live-on performances by Olympic-caliber figure-skating talents and skaters of international fame, the cast also bring an occasion for happy laughter.

Ravens, Eagles make it

BALTIMORE — The Baltimore Ravens delivered an emphatic message to the Denver Broncos and the rest of the NFL on Sunday: We are for real.

The Ravens shut down the league's second-ranked offense and got a bizarre touchdown from former Broncos tight end Shannon Sharpe in a 21-3 wild-card rout of Denver. The Broncos were held without a touchdown for the first time in 28 postseason games over a span of three decades.

"We were like a pack of deer being chased by wolves," Ravens defensive tackle Tony Siragusa said after they held the Broncos to 177 yards, 233 below their average.

Baltimore, in its first playoff game in 23 years, had five sacks and held

rookie Mike Anderson, who gained 1,500 yards rushing this season, to 40 on 15 carries.

For Baltimore, the long wait for another playoff game was worth it. The Ravens earned a trip to Nashville to play the Tennessee Titans, who edged them for the AFC Central crown.

Eagles 21, Buccaneers 3

In Philadelphia, the cold didn't knock the Tampa Bay Buccaneers out of the playoffs. Donovan McNabb did.

McNabb ran for a touchdown and threw for two more to lead the Philadelphia Eagles to 21-3 victory over Tampa Bay in an NFC wild-card game Sunday, sending them on to the Meadowlands to play the New York Giants next weekend. AP

Stars snub Match Play

MELBOURNE, Australia—Golf's top names have turned their backs on this week's \$US5 million World Match Play golf championship, casting doubt over the decision to begin a US PGA Tour season outside the United States for the first time.

Just 13 of the top 30 will now play at Melbourne's Metropolitan Golf Club from January 3-7 and only four of the top 10 — Ernie Els, Hal Sutton, Vijay

Singh and Tom Lehman.

While it remains the strongest field ever assembled in Australia, the absence of Tiger Woods, David Duval, Davis Love, Colin Montgomerie and defending champion Darren Clarke takes some gloss off the event.

Others who have decided to skip the tournament include Greg Norman, Nick Price, Paul Azinger and Sergio Garcia. AFP

The 12 Days of Christmas (Trial)

(sung roughly to the tune of 12 Days of Christmas)

Highlights ng Unang Impeachment Trial sa Asia

Korus ng Bayan

On the 1st day of trial, nakita ng bayan
Lagdang-Velarde hawig sa Presidente

On the 2nd day of trial, nasaksihan ng bayan,
Panay dada ni Enrile,
Nangangapa pa rin ang prosekusyon!

On the 3rd day of trial, inspirado ang bayan
Sa magiting na Emma Lim
Natuliro si Mendoza
Ice Tea daw ay kinakain!

On the 4th day of trial, nagulat ang bayan,
Sa tatag ni Malou Itchon,
At pahayag ng Senador
Acquittal daw and kanilang prediksiyon!

On the 5th day of trial, mas bumilib pa ang bayan,
Sa testimonya ni Chavit!
Milyun-milyong pera ng jueteng, ang dinadala
Tuwag kinsenas daw, kay Estrada!

On the 6th day of trial, pinagmasdan ng bayan, Si Chavit kri-nos-eksamin,
Pilit na ginigipit! Parang defense team si Enrile, panay hilik naman
ng Senador na 'di nakakaintindi!

On the 7th day of trial, nakulitan ang bayan, Galit sa rally si Santiago,
Envelopes na galing bangko, **Huwag na huwag daw bubuksan!**
Sabi ni Twink Macaraig sa FOCAP, Inamin ni Estrada, 200 milyong piso.
Tinanggap ni Serapiong lawyer niya.

On the 8th day of trial, narinig ng bayan, Interview ni Erap kay Sonza,
Tatlong manager ang nag-kumpirma, Ricaforte accounts, **Tatlumpu't-isa!!!**
Sarcastic si Santiago kay Annie Ngo, Dahil nasagot nito, Lahat ng tanong,
Hanggang huling numero!

On the 9th day of trial, nag-balik bayan, Si Chavit sa Senado, tobacco tax ay
binisto, Kinaltasan ng todo-todo, 130 milyong piso, **Sobrang ganid na ito!!!**
Nanggaling sa Landbank ng Vigan, Tuloy kay Atong Ang, Sabay withdraw ng
tatlong bayaran.

On the 10th day of trial, na-dismaya ang bayan, Pagkatapos ni Colayco, binuksan
ng Senado, Papeles na mula bangko, mukhang retokado, 142 milyong piso para
kay Yulo, **kitang-kitang burado!** Sabay amin naman si Dichaves, Siya daw si Velarde
Dapat sundin daw batas ng bank secrecy!

On the 11th day of trial, natuwa ang bayan, Matatapan ng testigo, mga taga-bangko
Si Ricaforte ay tinuro, iba't iba daw ang negosyo, May real estate at prawn farming
Meron pang tours and travel, **Pero jueteng tinago!** Si Justice Davide ay hero
Ng Taong-Bayan, Lahat ng survey, ito'y pinatibayan!

On the 12th day of trial, nag-milagro sa bayan, Clarissa Ocampo, lumabas na testigo
Saksi sa lagdaan, sa Malacañang Kitang-kitang pirma, one foot lang ang layo niya
kay Presidente Estrada, **Jose Velarde'y alyas niya!!!** Bombang sumabog, nabulabog,
Depensa'y bokya, Na-ospital tuloy si Mendoza!



"Nagulat/Nasuka"



"Nag-agam-agam"

Kaya ba ng kinakalawang na Prosecution team ang
kampon ni Atty Mendoza na kilalang nagpalusot
kay Lucio Tan, Marcos at Danding Cojuangco?



"Nakaka-bilib"

Hindi manalo ang gilás at mane-ubra sa
katotohanan.



"Nakaka-iyak!"

Kaya bang maging tapat sa sinumpaang
"impartiality" nina Sen. Santiago, Enrile at Tatad?
Paano pa ang "balato" twins?



"Nakakataas-kilay!"

Wala daw kredibilidad si Singson na testigo, dahil
siya ay jueteng lord. E di ba ang Capo de Tutti lang
ang nakapagpakulong sa Godfather sa Amerika?
Di'ba alam 'yon ng Defense?



"Nakaka-wais!"

Matututo na sigurong bumoto sa tamang kandidato
ang Pilipino.



"Nakakahilo!"

Ayon sa mga Muslim, wala silang natanggap ni
isang kusing! Wala silang alam na Muslim Youth
Foundation na pinamumunuan ng bayaw ni Erap.
Ang ba yon, moro-moro?



"Nakaka-WOW!"

Siguro sabi ni Santiago:
"Ms. Ngo is creating the impreyshen, that she has
complete memorizayshen of useless informayshen."



"Nabuking!"

Masalimuot ang paglalaba ng maruming pera.



"Nalitaw-mumol!"

Pag-utos talon, tanong ka ba "Gaano taas?"



"Nakakataba ng puso!"

Si Davide ay liwanag tungo sa lideratong may
konsiyensya.



"Nabubuhay ang pag-asal!"

May himala! Lalabas at lalabas ang katotohanan,
kahit baluktutin at imane-ubra.
Asiong, sumuko ka na!

MGA MUNI-MUNI SA BAGONG TAON:

- Magiging Erap-less ba ang 2001?
 - Ano pa ang ipapasabog na bomba ng Prosekusyon? Si George Go, si Sel Yulo?
 - Kahit makalusot si Erap, may maniniwala pa ba sa kanya lalo na't may Asiaweek write-up pa?
 - Bakit naka-wiretap si Gringo, Enrile, John Osmeña, Kit Tatad --na mga kakampi ng Presidente?
 - Sabi ni Maceda, mas masahol pa sa death penalty ang impeachment trial para kay Erap.
- Kung ganoon, bakit di na lang bumaba at tapusin ang paghihirap ng lahat?

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2. Once enrolled to Express Online, accomplish a Globe application form.
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 - Special Plan Certificate

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- C. That in case of Transfer of Ownership, within one (1) year to another account:
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- D. Name of depositor and/or credit cardholder and Globe Handyphone applicant must be the same.

■ On Target: Who was behind the bombings A20

METRO

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

■ More cops deployed for impeachment trial A20

Garbage colonies rising

BY NELSON F. FLORES

GARBAGE colonies have suddenly emerged around Metro Manila as debris from the New Year celebration continue to pile up on the streets while trash collectors also went on a holiday.

The closure of the San Mateo Sanitary Landfill midnight Sunday also aggravated the garbage situa-

tion in the metropolis.

Greater Metro Manila Solid Waste Management Committee Chair Robert Aventajado earlier assured the public that there would be no garbage crisis after the closure of the San Mateo dumpsite.

But the mountains of garbage rising on sidestreets manifested a critical mass even as a local court issued a temporary restraining order suspending the planned opening and operation of another dumpsite

on Semirara Island in Antique.

Aventajado however revealed that the MMDA was able to find a place where garbage from Metro Manila would be temporarily dumped.

He refused to reveal the location of the new dumpsite adding that its location would be announced later.

Aventajado said local government authorities and MMDA officials are keeping in touch with one another. He said government lawyers are also

pooling their talents in a bid to lift the TRO over the dumpsite on Semirara in Caluya, Antique.

The plan to turn a portion of the 5,000-hectare Semirara Island into Metro Manila's wastebasket unexpectedly met stiff opposition from the provincial and municipal governments of Antique.

Environmentalists also joined the fray to block the proposal that would turn the island into a dumpsite.

GARBAGE/A20



A GARBAGE pile, familiar site in many Metro Manila areas, occupies two-thirds of a portion of Rizal Avenue in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

RANDY HORMILLOSA

'They can no longer use Payatas'

BY ANDREA TRINIDAD-ECHAVEZ

JUST when Quezon City officials thought that the worst of the waste crisis was behind them, here comes a new garbage problem that again threatens to explode in their faces.

Residents of the city's only dumpsite located in Barangay Payatas yesterday vowed to barricade all roads leading to it.

At least four Payatas-based homeowners associations also threatened to sue local officials if they insisted on dumping the city's garbage in their backyard—site of the tragic garbage avalanche which buried thousands of homes and killed 217 people.

The remains of at least 80 people are believed still buried at the site.

"We are already drafting a letter to remind Mayor (Ismael) Mathay (Jr.) that the term for the operation of the dumpsite has lapsed on Dec. 31. They can no longer dump garbage at Payatas based on the memorandum of President Estrada," said Boy Espiritu, chair of the urban poor group Kadamay.

He said the letter would be sent to Mathay today.

Yesterday, members of the July 10 Payatas Victims Organization, Kadamay, Samahang Tunay, Sangkap and Samahang Magkakapitbahay, held a meeting to plan what legal actions to take should the city government refuse to heed their call for the dumpsite's complete closure.

Espiritu said the groups initially agreed to form human barricades on all roads leading to the dumpsite.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Mathay for comment but he was unavailable.

The killer dumpsite was reopened on Nov. 10, four months after thousands of tons of garbage crashed on thousands of homes at a relocation area.

President Estrada gave the go-signal for Mathay to reopen Payatas to avert the city's worsening garbage situation.

But the President allowed the city government to use the dumpsite only until the end of December 2000.

The San Mateo Sanitary Landfill in Rizal province, where most of Metro Manila's garbage used to be dumped, was also closed on Dec. 31.

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Mr. Johnny Angeles, Executive Director
Philippine Motor Association (PMA)

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Party House
SAN JUAN DEL MONTE, PAMPANGA

Who was behind the bombings?

WHO was behind the bombings last Saturday that killed at least 14 people and injured 90 others and held Metro Manila and the rest of the country in a grip of terror?

National Security Adviser Alexander Aguirre accuses the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Its motive was to avenge its defeat and humiliation by the government in Mindanao.

Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito, President Erap's talkative son, blames the opposition, especially former President Fidel V. Ramos and former National Security Adviser Joe Almonte.

The opposition could not have done it because it holds all the aces against the President. The testimony of Equitable PCI Bank vice president Clarissa Ocampo at the impeachment trial was so damning it's enough for Mr. Estrada to lose his job. Another vital witness, also a woman, is slated to testify against Mr. Estrada when the impeachment trial resumes today. The testimony of this witness is more damaging than Ocampo's, according to prosecutors.

Why would the opposition resort to dastardly acts "to compel the President to resign"—Aguirre's words—when the noose is tightening around Mr. Estrada's neck at the impeachment trial?

"I know the President. He has no stomach for such things," said JV Ejercito.

One can't blame JV for talking that way about his father. But perhaps there are dark secrets that the son doesn't know about the father.

Erap is a very ruthless man. When he was chief of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission (PACC), he knew about the extra-judicial executions of suspected kidnappers and bank robbers that his subordinates committed in the name of justice.

The MILF and Islamic fundamentalist groups, like the Abu Sayyaf, are capable of committing cowardly and dastardly acts.

Most Moros, for all their vaunted bravery, don't fight fair. They depend on sheer number and treachery in fighting.

Moro bandits don't care about killing and maiming innocent people so long as their victims are not Muslims like them.

But the more likely suspect in the bombings are some people in the government who would stand to lose a lot if Mr. Estrada is found guilty in the impeachment

ON
TARGET

Ramon
Tulfo



trial.

Remember, Mr. Estrada still has four more years to go before his term expires. His term would be cut short if he were found guilty.

The people behind the bombings wanted to create a scenario that would justify the declaration of martial law or a state of emergency in the country.

Expect more bombings in the next few days.

President Marcos and his minions created a scenario by planting bombs in public places and blaming the communists for it.

The confusion that ensued led to the declaration of martial law in September 1972.

Since President Erap is an admirer of Marcos, there is a possibility that he's following the dictator's strategy.

Despite what they say about Marcos, the guy, was a compassionate person.

The bombs that exploded in many areas did not kill innocent civilians. Marcos' men planted the bombs in empty places.

In last Saturday's bombings, the intention was to kill as many innocent civilians as possible. The bombs were planted in crowded places.

The people behind last Saturday's bombings are ruthless.

No matter what most citizens think about the Philippine National Police (PNP)—that it's an organization of corrupt, abusive and inefficient cops—there are still many policemen who are dedicated to their work and would lay down their lives to save others.

Insp. Nestor Salvador and SPO4 Roberto Gutierrez of the Makati police proved that our cops are worthy of respect from the citizenry.

Salvador and Gutierrez were blasted to death while they were defusing a bomb found outside the Dusit Hotel in Makati.

The next time you meet a cop in the streets, look at him with understanding and respect. He may be corrupt, but he's capable of great deeds when duty calls for it.

More cops deployed for Estrada trial

BY AGNES DONATO

POLICE visibility is expected to increase as the impeachment trial resumes today, Senior Supt. Nardito Yorro, Eastern Police Director for operations, said yesterday.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) has sought additional policemen from Metro Manila's five districts to man the big rallies that were expected to be launched by supporters and critics of President Estrada in front of the Senate, Yorro said.

Meanwhile, Metro Manila police chief Edgar Aglipay has ordered the EPD to produce another battalion of

policemen to be trained and to be on alert always in case of untoward incidents.

Some 40 policewomen would comprise one platoon of the battalion.

Yorro said since most rallies are held outside the EPD area, the district is expected to send in additional troops to render assistance.

The NCRPO is presently preparing to ensure peace and order in the metropolis after various groups have revealed their plans to hold bigger strikes.

Yorro explained that they would have to pull out 55 policemen,

mostly new recruits, from the four police stations to form the new CDM team.

In the first assembled EPD-CDM, each station had to contribute 20 policemen. The EPD has a total of 1,373 police personnel. Yorro, however, explained they would be selective in choosing policemen to be assigned in the CDM.

Supt. Jose Gentiles, Mandaluyong City police chief, assured the public police would continue being visible in crowded areas such as malls, markets, banks, pawnshops, schools, passenger jeepney terminals and even churches.



AGLIPAY

2 killed in Pasay

TWO people died and three others were seriously wounded as violence marred New Year's Day in Pasay City.

Early yesterday morning, a 33-year-old man was found dead with two bullet wounds in the head in front of his house.

Police identified the man as Carlito Garote, married, a plumber and resident of 107 Gamban Ext., Riverside St., Pasay City.

The victim was discovered about 4 a.m. by resident Iluminado Villacorte who was walking in the area.

Four hours later, the body of a man was found in a muddy canal by a barangay tanod in front of the Heritage Hotel on Roxas Boulevard.

The unidentified victim was described by police as between 25 and 35 years old, muscular and fair-skinned. He was in blue jeans and shirt.

Meanwhile, three men were seriously injured after they were stabbed in separate incidents in Pasay.

The victims were identified as Edgula Trinidad, 50, married and a resident of 22 Corazon St., Pasay City; Rommel Mendoza, 13, of 122 Primero De Mayo St.; and Herbert Potano, 17, of PNR Site, Tunasan in Muntinlupa City.

Alcun Papa

Policeman in trouble

FOR ALLEGEDLY firing his service firearm yesterday during the New Year celebrations, a Pasay City policeman would be facing an administrative case that could lead to a suspension or dismissal from the force.

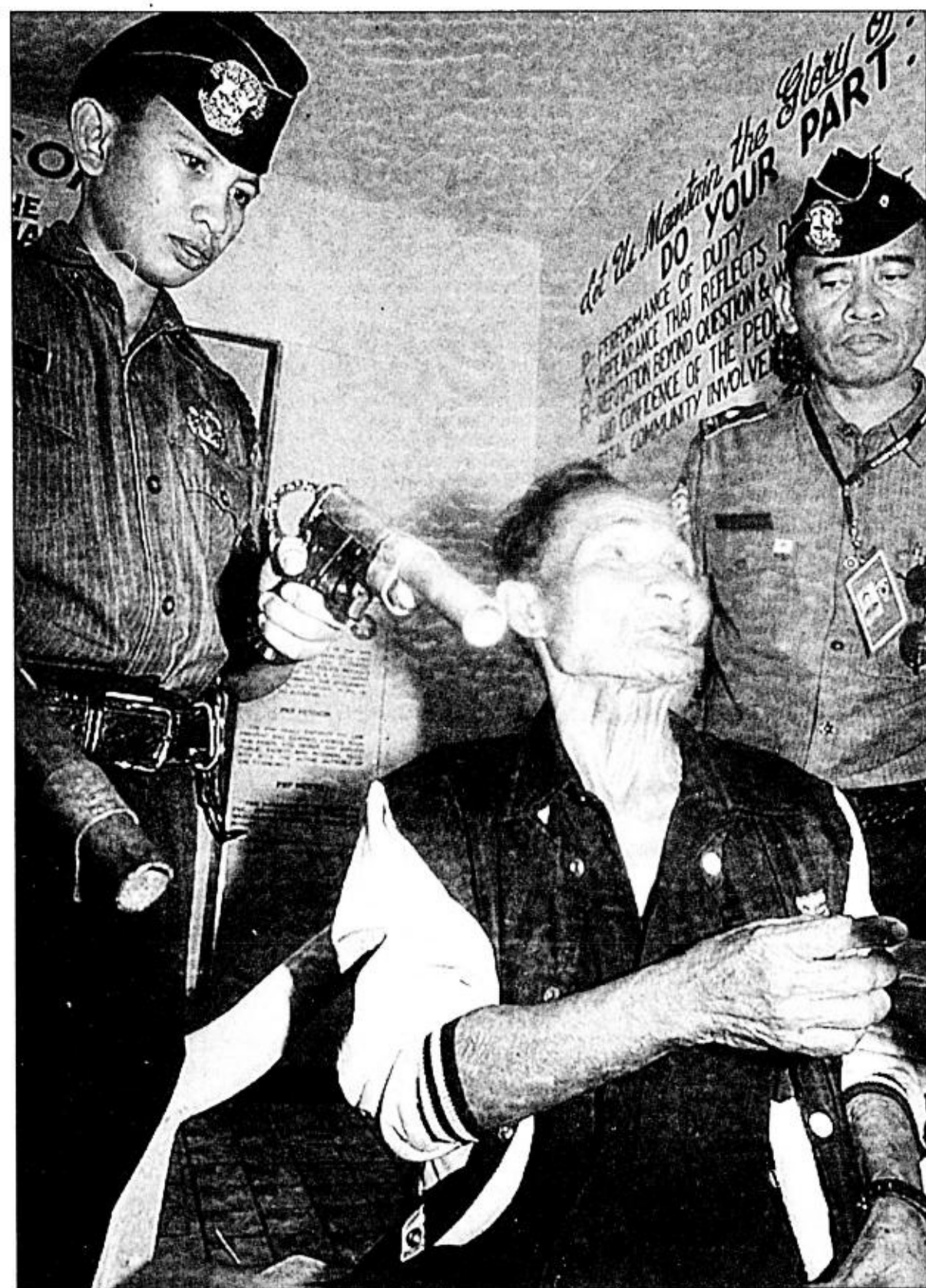
PO2 Pedryn Evangelista of Solitaria Street in Pasay, who is assigned to the Pasay police anti-narcotics unit, would also be facing a case of indiscriminate firing after his neighbor Cecilio Tecson, 46, of 417 Solitaria Street, accused him of firing his gun at about 12:20 a.m.

Tecson said one of the bullets from Evangelista's gun shattered his glass window.

Police recovered from the scene six spent bullet shells and one deformed slug.

Evangelista has yet to be taken into custody.

Alcun Papa



DEADLY TOYS

The outsized guns could have passed off as toys but WPD cops were surprised after finding the firearms, both deadly and illegal, in the possession of 68-year-old Roger Dice who was nabbed in Paco, Manila yesterday.

Malonzo, Malapitan fight over budget

BY CHRISTIAN V. ESQUERRA

CALOOCAN City Vice Mayor Oscar Malapitan yesterday hit Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo, his political foe, for asking the city council to approve the 2001 budget hastily.

Malapitan adjourned a special city council session on Saturday, which Malonzo called to expedite the approval of Caloocan's P1,669,035,809 budget for this year.

He said the session went against the council's house rules, which does not allow the holding of special sessions during the holidays.

Earlier, Malapitan, who presides over the city council, and opposition councilors have described the budget ordinance as highly defective.

They vowed to urge the Department of Budget and Management to issue a temporary restraining order on its approval.

Reiterating that the budget was fault-laden, Malapitan said its approval would only make things more complicated and prolong the suffering of the people.

But Malonzo, who threatened to file a suit before the Office of the Ombudsman if Malapitan and the opposition councilors would insist on delaying the implementation of the budget, said their continuous objection to the budget would cause a lot of damage to the city.

"It will prevent the local government from implementing its projects for this year," Malonzo said. "We

will not hesitate to sue them."

Accusing Malapitan and the opposition councilors of ignorance regarding procedures, Malonzo also claimed they did not know proper decorum and quorum.

He said Malapitan and opposition councilors are not in the position to tell if Saturday's special session was illegal.

"It's up to the court to decide," Malonzo said.

Opposition Councilor Rizaldy Dolatre, who filed a motion to adjourn what he called an illegal session, was said to have nearly figured in a fistfight with Councilor Edgar Erice, a Malonzo supporter.

Erice sponsored the budget ordinance.

Even when the session was adjourned, Erice himself presided over a

"special" session outside the session hall where Councilors Dennis Padilla, Eddie Domingo, Benedicto Gonzales Jr., Benjamin Manlapig, Susana Punzalan, Eduardo Rosca, and Luis Varela approved the budget.

The councilors, all known supporters of Malonzo, even increased the P1.6-billion budget to P1,709,615,809.

But Malonzo explained that the increase of more than P40 million was needed in implementing the city government's projects such as the construction of a new city hall in northern Caloocan and the full computerization of all local government transactions.

"We'll be more efficient this time," Malonzo said. "We'll always be ready against the opposition's obstructionism especially since the local elections are just around the corner."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, January 2, 2001
Week before Epiphany

1st Reading:

Gospel:

This was the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?" John recognized the truth and did not deny it. He said, "I am not the Messiah."

And they asked him, "Then who are you? Elijah?" He answered, "I am not." They said, "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Tell us who you are, so that we can give some answer to those who sent us. How do you see yourself?" And John said, quoting the prophet Isaiah, "I am the voice crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord."

Those who had been sent were Pharisees; so they put a further question to John: "Then why are you baptizing if you are not the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?" John answered, "I baptize you with water, but among you stands one whom you do not know; although he comes after me, I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal."

This happened in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Commentary:

The Lord wants to come to us. When he first came, John prepared the way for his coming to the Israelites. Today, too, we need people to prepare the way of the Lord into people's hearts and into our society. You are among those people called to be partners in the new evangelization. Each one is called to be a voice crying out, "Prepare the way of the Lord!" You may be only one voice but when you speak as one who has already received the Redeemer in his/her heart, then your voice has a special resonance and effectiveness.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES)—Conspiracy—There is conspiracy when two (2) or more persons come to an agreement concerning the commission of a felony and decide to commit it. The same degree of proof necessary to prove the crime is required to support a finding of criminal conspiracy. Direct proof, however, is not essential to show conspiracy. It need not be shown that the parties actually came together and agreed in express terms to enter into and pursue a common design. Proof of concerted action before, during and after the crime, which demonstrates their unity of design and objective is sufficient. Thus, to hold an accused liable as co-principal by reason of conspiracy, he must be shown to have performed an overt act in pursuance of or furtherance of the conspiracy, although the acts performed might have been distinct and separate. This overt act may consist of active participation in the actual commission of the crime itself or it may consist of moral assistance to his co-conspirators by being present at the time of the commission of the crime, or by exerting a moral ascendancy over the other co-conspirators by moving them to execute or implement the criminal plan. Once conspiracy is established, all the conspirators are answerable as co-principals regardless of their degree of participation, for in the contemplation of the law, the act of one becomes the act of all. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Quisumbing, Second Division, People v. Ponce, G. R. No. 126254, September 29, 2000]

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

Garbage colonies . . . (From page A19)

Environmentalists said the island is a marine and wildlife preserve and to put a dumpsite there would upset the delicate balance of nature which could lead to an ecological disaster. They claimed the leachate that would be coming from the dumpsite might find its way to the famous island resort of Boracay in Aklan.

But Environment Secretary Antonio Ceriles downplayed the probable environmental impact of the dumpsite, saying that some people

are just getting emotional.

Ceriles said during a radio interview that even before officials reached the decision to turn the island into a dumpsite, there is a coalmine already operating on the island.

He added the mine, as a pollution source, could be worse than a dumpsite.

Ceriles also reported there was no environmental incident resulting from mining operations on the island.

He explained that a part of the coalmine would be converted into a dumpsite. He added that contrary to speculations, the area is geologically stable.

But Ceriles added the department would not allow the operation of the dumpsite without the necessary environmental permit.

"We will see to it that environmental laws are followed by the MMDA," Ceriles said.

The SMSI was closed after a

opposed to the operation of a dumpsite in the province waged massive protests which led to its closure. Protesters cited health and environmental reasons in wanting to close the controversial landfill.

Attempts to reopen the Carmona Sanitary Landfill in Cavite also failed following the refusal of local residents, the municipal government of Carmona and the provincial government to allow its reopening.

The CSL was closed in 1998.

A Quest for **PEACE** as a fruit of **JUSTICE** founded on **TRUTH**

Our country continues to be in crisis. There is increasing political instability. We are on the verge of economic collapse. The moral foundation of the nation is being seriously eroded.

At the center of the maelstrom is the impeachment trial of President Estrada. How this trial eventually ends will determine the future of this country. The President refuses to resign, which would ease the pain of our people, and also of his family. On the contrary, the President is combative, which bodes ill for the future.

Still, there is always hope. There is hope when we have courageous women like Emma Lim, Menchu Itchon and Clarissa Ocampo. There is hope when there are Senators still concerned about the well-being of the nation. There is hope when the Presiding Officer, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., is a man of proven competence and integrity.

We long for peace. We insist on justice. We thirst for truth.

Truth is not disinformation or propaganda. It is not served by questionable surveys. It is not served by dismissing the popular outcry as simply that of the Opposition. It is not served by downplaying explosive revelations exposed during the trial.

Truth cannot be served by the Defense resorting to technicalities, delays or stonewalling. Allow the truth to be told! The more you suppress testimony, the more people are convinced there is something to hide and the President is guilty.

Truth will surface if more witnesses come forward and tell all they know. We call on the patriotism of these witnesses. Follow your conscience. Have courage, for the people are with you.

Truth can be assured by media that will not allow itself to be bought. The people, especially the poor, need to know the whole truth. If you compromise your integrity by distorting the truth, you will never be at peace.

Truth should be defended by the people. Remain vigilant. Fight for the truth.

Truth can be established if the President himself testifies. If you are innocent and have nothing to hide, there is nothing to fear. The final decision to testify belongs to you, not to your lawyers.

Truth will be served if the Senator-judges remain impartial, neither pro- nor anti-Erap, but pro-God and pro-people.

Finally, **truth** and justice cannot be achieved through extra-constitutional measures, nor through violence, but only through peaceful means.

We continue to pray for peace. Peace for our beloved country. Peace to ensure the future of our children. Let the truth come out! Let justice prevail! Let peace reign in the land!

*"surely the Lord will proclaim peace to his people,
to the faithful, to those who trust in him.
Near indeed is salvation for the loyal;
prosperity will fill our land.
Love and truth will meet;
justice and peace will kiss.
Truth will spring from the earth;
justice will look down from heaven.
The Lord will surely grant abundance;
our land will yield its increase.
Prosperity will march before the Lord,
and good fortune will follow behind."
(Psalm 85:9-14)*



COUPLES FOR CHRIST

Singing newcomer releases recording debut

WHILE most young ladies blissfully dream of a career as doctor, nurse, stewardess or housewife,

20-year-old Teresa Morales struggles to be a successful recording artist in this competitive local mu-

sic industry. Teresa's self-titled debut album took off with the carrier single, "Kumusta

Ka," which is a revival of a Freddie Aguilar hit. Released only a few weeks ago, the al-



MORALES

bum has made it to the radio and sales charts without the usual fanfare that goes with debut musical outings.

"I'm just starting to promote on radio," Teresa says. "I will also do a lot of TV guestings and mall tours."

"I'm very excited about all these. I've never even imagined to sing professionally. But now that I am, I feel it's what I've always wanted to do."

Other than her singing career, Teresa keeps herself busy with her fashion and personality development lessons at John Roberts Power. She is also learning how to drive.

Aside from her talent in singing, Teresa plays the piano, flute and guitar. She's an animal lover and has many pets at home.

Teresa hails from San Jose, Del Monte, Bulacan. She later moved to Dumaguete City, where she spent her growing up years. At 13, Teresa joined an amateur singing contest and won first prize.

Interestingly, she also won second place in a motocross contest held in Negros Oriental.

Teresa was discovered by talent manager Rene V. Reyes, while she was performing at the Philippine Medical Auditorium as part of her training for the Center for Pop Music Philippines.

Reyes manages Teresa's singing career and is also the man behind Global Records, Teresa's recording outfit, with lawyer Leo A. Gamolo as executive producer.

Teresa's album also includes songs by Mon del Rosario ("Huwag Kang Aamin" and "Only You Can Make Me Cry") and Nonoy Tan ("Kuwentong Rock n' Roll," "Ang Boy-friend Kong Alien," "It's Over" and "Sino Ba sa Amin?")

Vehnee Saturno, who is also the album's producer, contributed three cuts — "Nang Sabihin Mo," "Muli'y Binuhay Mo" and "Bakit Di Mo Sinabi."

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QUEZON-1	DEATH ROW
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CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SUGATANG PUSO
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DEATH ROW
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CINEMA-12	PING LACSON STORY
CINEMA-14	DEATH ROW
CINEMA-15	TANGING YAMAN

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5 TANGING YAMAN	5 SPIRIT WARRIORS	5 TANGING YAMAN
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- 11 DOLBY SURROUND PING LACSON STORY
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- 5 DOLBY SURROUND SUGATANG PUSO
- 6 DOLBY SURROUND PING LACSON STORY
- 7 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND DEATH ROW
- 8 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND SPIRIT WARRIORS
- 9 DOLBY SURROUND PING LACSON STORY
- 10 DOLBY SURROUND TANGING YAMAN
- 11 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND SUGATANG PUSO
- 12 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND MARKOVA: COMFORT GAY

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SM SOUTHMALL 8960188, 8960782

- 1 ULTRA SURROUND PING LACSON STORY
- 2 ULTRA SURROUND MARKOVA: COMFORT GAY
- 3 DOLBY DIGITAL EX TANGING YAMAN
- 4 ULTRA SURROUND DEATH ROW
- 5 ULTRA SURROUND SPIRIT WARRIORS
- 6 ULTRA SURROUND DEATH ROW
- 7 ULTRA SURROUND SPIRIT WARRIORS
- 8 DOLBY DIGITAL EX SUGATANG PUSO
- 9 ULTRA SURROUND TANGING YAMAN
- 10 ULTRA SURROUND MARKOVA: COMFORT GAY

TUTUBAN CENTER 7514302

- 1 ULTRA SURROUND TANGING YAMAN
- 2 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND DEATH ROW
- 3 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND MARKOVA: COMFORT GAY
- 4 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND SUGATANG PUSO

SM CEBU 7120876

- 1 DOLBY SURROUND UNBREAKABLE
- 2 ULTRA SURROUND BAWAT HAKBANG PANGANIB
- 3 ULTRA SURROUND SPIRIT WARRIORS
- 4 ULTRA SURROUND TANGING YAMAN
- 5 ULTRA SURROUND PING LACSON STORY
- 6 ULTRA SURROUND JUAN & TED
- 7 DOLBY SURROUND BRING IT ON

SM ILOILO 7309422

- 1 ULTRA SURROUND TANGING YAMAN
- 2 ULTRA SURROUND UNBREAKABLE
- 3 ULTRA SURROUND ABANDONADA
- 4 ULTRA SURROUND THE GRINCH
- 5 ULTRA SURROUND PING LACSON STORY
- 6 ULTRA SURROUND CHARLIE'S ANGELS
- 7 ULTRA SURROUND THE REPLACEMENTS
- 8 ULTRA SURROUND SPIRIT WARRIORS

SM PAMPANGA 7128015

- 1 DOLBY DIGITAL EX DEATH ROW
- 2 DOLBY DIGITAL EX SPIRIT WARRIORS
- 3 DOLBY SURROUND MARKOVA: COMFORT GAY
- 4 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND SUGATANG PUSO
- 5 SYNTHESIZED SURROUND TANGING YAMAN
- 6 DOLBY SURROUND PING LACSON STORY

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KEVIN: Buy our product!
It's better! Bye!

SMART IDD now.

9:00 a.m.

KEVIN: Hello Mr. Stanley! Our
product is better than the
competition.

9:45 a.m.

KEVIN: It's just what the market
wants.

11:15 a.m.

KEVIN: I've just found out that
the new model is ready for
shipment.

11:55 a.m.

KEVIN: So Mr. Stanley, will you
order?

STANLEY: Yes, we'll order a
shipment for 3.5 million.

KEVIN: FORE!!

STANLEY: Okay, okay!
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Nora Ephron directs John Travolta in 'Lucky Numbers'

FOR most of their respective careers, actor John Travolta and writer-director Nora Ephron have generally been inhabiting different worlds, since the movies they make are so different from one another. He's an action-drama-adventure star, while she specializes in romantic comedies.

Fact is, however, they did work together in "Michael," and they were so happy with the experience that they're following it up with "Lucky Numbers."

Travolta decided once more to sweeten his act and tone down the toughness—and the change appears to be doing both of them a lot of good.

Travolta, especially. After all, his last few film outings haven't exactly been hits, so he needs to be more varied in his approach.

A comedy appears to be just the ticket for him at this point in his career, and with the much-admired Ephron calling the shots, he's in good hands.

In "Lucky Numbers," Travolta plays a TV weatherman who stands to lose a lot of money due to an unsuccessful dealership. To avoid financial ruin, he hatches up a shady scheme with the station's lotto ball girl, played by Lisa Kudrow.

The story is inspired by a

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre



real-life scam to fix a lottery in the United States. In the film version of the story, the plan falls apart right from the start. Kudrow brings a thug into the scheme, and the goon turns out to be an inept but still dangerous guy who screws up everything he touches.

About his character, Russ Richards, Travolta says, "He does something bad, but he's guileless, and this lack of awareness of how he's behaving makes you tend to forgive him."

On Ephron: "Nora is a wonderful director. She has great ideas, a real vision and a sharp take on what to do with the material. Every camera set-up is fresh and original, and she allows us to be free to express ourselves within the parameters of each of our characters, which we have previously worked out."

Feedback

FROM Rowena L. Velasquez of Makati City: "I have watched two

of the movies showing in the Metro Manila Film Festival, 'Tanging Yaman' and 'Deathrow,' and I must say that the first film moved me to tears at several points.

"What I found touching about it was its understanding of the complex relationships in a Filipino family, where you have to relate to so many different personalities, unlike the American family, for example, which is much smaller.

"That's why, in a Filipino family, there are more layers because there are more people, and due to our Asian and Spanish influences, there are different rules for relating to older and younger relatives, for example. So, the situation is more complex and harder to understand, which made the film's handling even more impressive.

"The other film I watched, 'Deathrow,' impressed me not so much with the lead performances, but with the interesting combination of characters of the other prisoners in the cell. Too bad that these actors don't have big names, so they can't attract a big audience on their own.

"Still, speaking for myself, if the performance is good, I will go out of my way to see it, whether it's by a big star or an

unknown..."

Boob-tube boobos

HOST: Good morning, po. We have a great show for you this morning.—O, bumati ka naman sa kanila.

Cohost: Of course! Magandang umaga po, dear viewers, just watch us kahit hindi pa kayo gising! (Mahirap yata gawin yon!)

Host: What do you think about our show?

Guest: I like it, especially your portion on Filipinos living abroad.

Host: Oh, why do you like that portion in particular?

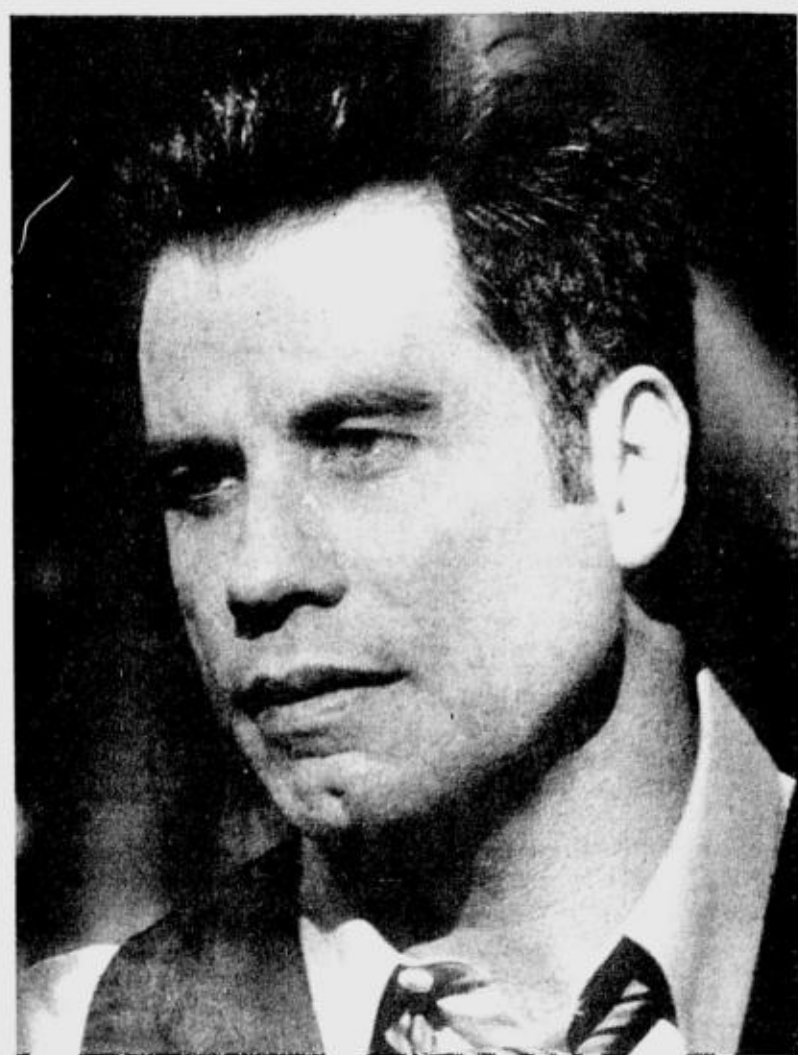
Guest: Because it's so homesick, especially when you miss your loved ones not around! (Ah, puwedeng paki ulit?)

Host: Now, our manghuhula guest will read the fortune of our guest. Ah, Madame, ano po ang nakikita niyong kapalaran para sa kanya next year?

Fortune teller: Puwede ko bang sabihin—?

Guest: Okay lang, gusto ko rin malaman, e.

Fortune teller: Ang nakikita ko—: Balang araw, baka magkaroon ka rin ng future! (Ano sakit mo naman magsalita!)



TRAVOLTA. Has decided once more to sweeten his act and tone down the toughness.

OPENS JANUARY 12

MTRCB RATING **G** General Patronage **ALL AGES ADMITTED**

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SCHWARZENEGGER IN NEW ACTION-THRILLER

Action superstar Arnold Schwarzenegger plays Adam Gibson, who comes home one night to discover that his life has been stolen by someone who looks just like him—his clone—and he is plunged into a sinister world of murder, corruption and high-tech deception in Columbia Pictures' action-thriller, "The 6th Day." The movie is a provocative, high-octane look at what happens when technology falls into destructive, corrupt hands and when one man refuses to be a pawn in the deadly conspiracy. "The 6th Day" opens Jan. 4 in local theaters.

Box-office hits on cable

THIS month, Pinoy Blockbuster Channel airs blockbuster movies that showcase the hottest new finds in local show biz.

"Sunday Blockbuster Premiere" (7 p.m.) presents "Hinahanap-Hanap Kita," starring Giselle Toengi and Aga Muhlach (Jan. 7), "Ako Ba ang Nasa Puso Mo?," with Judy Ann Santos and Mark Anthony Fernandez (Jan. 14), "Huwag na Huwag Kang Lalapit, Darling," with Earl Ignacio and Daisy Reyes (Jan. 21) and "Huling Sayaw," with

Elizabeth Oropesa, Rita Magdalena, Alma Concepcion and Toffee Calma (Jan. 28).

New action stars on "Friday Action Blockbusters" presents four rising heroes (7 p.m.): Romnick Sarmenta in "Kahit Harangan ng Bala" (Jan. 5), Zoren Legaspi in "Daniel Eskultor" (Jan. 12), Gardo Versoza in "Medrano" (Jan. 19) and Victor Neri in "Nototrys" (Jan. 26).

Pinoy Blockbuster Channel airs on SkyCable, Sun Cable and other quality cable operators.

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TANGING YAMAN 1:35, 3:45, 6:00, 7:20	SPIRIT WARRIORS 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50	TANGING YAMAN 12:45, 2:55, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00

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SASABOG JAN. 4!

SCHWARZENEGGER x2, in '6TH DAY'

Arnold Schwarzenegger visits the future with twice the Action in Columbia Pictures' new high-voltage thriller from the director of James Bond hit TOMORROW NEVER DIES.

The world's No. 1 action star topples the highest-grossing action movies of all time, including TERMINATOR 1&2, TOTAL RECALL, ERASER, TRUE LIES and END OF DAYS.

In THE 6TH DAY, Schwarzenegger plays an expert fighter pilot wrenched from his family and plunged into a world of murder, corruption and high-tech deception when he is accidentally cloned or duplicated, a "6th day violation."

The multi-million-dollar production features futuristic auto-navigation cars and fighter planes, hair-raising stunts & crashes, and high-tech visual effects as the original Schwarzenegger faces off with the clone Schwarzenegger.

THE 6TH DAY

MTRCB RATING **G** General Patronage **ALL AGES ADMITTED**

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Filipino family plays in 'Family Feud'

BY MARIA RAMONITA AND MARIA MILAGROS SISON

"FAMILY FEUD" has been entertaining audiences all over the world for two decades. In the United States as well as in many other countries, including the Philippines, it has become a regular part of many people's viewing habits.

My sister, two cousins and I were contestants on the Family Feud.

For the unfamiliar and uninitiated, Family Feud—also known in the US as The Feud—is a game show that pits two families composed of five members each.

The objective is to give the most popular answers to survey questions asked of 100 people across the United States. For a survey answer to be included, at least two people should have given it. A strike means only one person gave the answer in the survey, so it did not make the survey board on The Feud.

In the first three rounds, a team is allowed three strikes before the other family gets a chance to answer and get the points. But in the fourth round, after only one strike, the other family gets the chance to answer.

A family should get 250 points, which qualify it to the fast-money round where two family members try to get the top answers to five survey questions.

A total of 200 points in this round wins \$10,000. Anything less than 200 points, the family earns \$5 for every point.

What is it like to be a contestant on Family Feud?

This thought crossed my sister Maria F's mind while watching one episode of The Feud. Maria F is also known as Maria Faye or Faye.

At the end of the episode, the announcer said, "If you want to be a contestant, dial this number." Faye jotted down the number and, for the heck of it, dialed it.

"At first it was really busy," Maria F recalls. "But after several tries, I got through and left my contact number."

A return call came through and gave her option dates for the audition. The stage was set for a memorable experience.

The audition

My swinging sister's first concern was to form the best five people who had the optimum chance to win \$10,000. She contacted her two other sisters: Maria Milagros, also known as Maria M or Mimi, an editorial assistant for a local publication and the loving mother of 11-year-old Robin; and Maria Ramonita, also known as Maria R or Monette, a sports buff formerly connected with the most influential newspaper in the Philippines, the INQUIRER.

The other two members of the team were our cousins from our mother's side: Maria Aurora Dimacali or Maria A; and Terry, the only non-Maria. Both are management analysts with a law enforcement agency.

On May 16, we went to the NBC Studios in Burbank, California. Upon arrival at the studios at 4 p.m., we were met by one of the Feud staffers who took our picture. We were told to bring two identification cards: one with an ID picture and our social security card.

We were escorted inside and saw 11 other families hoping for their chance to win \$10,000 and bask in their 15 minutes of fame. Snacks were served.

The contestant producer (CP) said she was looking for a family that was lively and energetic and had that special quality that shone through.

Upon seeing the names of the Sison team, one of the assistants said we would be a hit with the CP. "This is hysterical," the CP remarked.

The key things to remember: Be absolutely quiet and follow all the rules.

The other families watched in the audience while waiting for a chance to compete as two families played a mock game with the CP as the emcee. Each game was recorded.

Relaxed

One family was unable to show up, leaving another family without a match. We were scheduled to be the last. When our turn came, we didn't have a family to match up with, so we just played a couple of practice rounds with two different families.

One opponent was breathing heavily, apparently feeling pressured, while the Sisons were relaxed and brimming with energy.

The question: Name a reason why

a woman would turn down a marriage proposal.

Fast-draw Maria F rang in first and said, "because the guy has no money."

It was a good answer and made the survey. Maria M said, "the guy is ugly." Although it didn't make the survey, the whole audience laughed and had fun with her answer.

The CP had this buzzer she pressed to signify a strike. Maria R said, "because he cheats and can't commit." This was given credit since it was similar to the answer "lack of commitment."

Terry said the no. 1 answer, "because she did not love him," and the no. 5 answer, "in-law problems."

The CP quipped, "She (Terry) gave two of the right answers and she wasn't even a Maria."

The Sisons were laughing, shouting, jumping, clapping and giving each other high-fives.

Love that energy

Only the best families who make an indelible impression get invited to the next step, which is taping for the show.

The CP said she has never seen a family like the Sisons. Asians are generally known to be shy, reserved and timid. It must have been the first time she ever saw an all-Filipino, all-female team with natural, boundless, positive energy.

As we were getting ready to leave, the CP said that she loved our energy and asked if we were available to tape a show on Thursday or Friday, barely two to three days after our first try.

We were given packets containing information on the taping. We decided on a Friday, May 19. It was also my brother Jun's birthday.

The taping

We learned first-hand that being on a game show is an arduous waiting game. We had to be at the studio by 11 a.m. wearing our Sunday best, which was mostly colorful spring outfits.

But the preparations began much earlier. Wakeup time was 5 a.m. or 6 a.m. Appointment at 8 a.m. for hair and make-up by Hair People's Mariquit and Cora, originally from Bacolod, whose salon is located in Vermont.

We came in color-coordinated outfits. Maria Faye was in a stunning black Armani suit and matching Donna Karan gold blouse. Maria Milagros was in a refreshing apple green pant suit. Maria Aurora was in a vibrant red skirt and a blazer. Maria Ramonita was in a peach blazer with a green undershirt and



black tight pants. Terry was in a cool blue suit.

We were scheduled for the fifth and final round.

We were asked to bring extra outfits. But the wardrobe consultant took one look at us and didn't want to change a thing.

There was also a young all-boys family of nine in the tradition of N' Sync or Backstreet Boys.

Strict rules

We had to adhere to the strict rules on fairness and fair play to avoid any hint of rigging. We were not allowed to talk to anyone in the audience except fellow contestants and the coordinators.

No one was allowed to wander alone. During bathroom breaks, we had to form a single file accompanied by coordinators. Paper work and legal guidelines and procedures had to be reviewed and done altogether.

Each family was moved into a room for a short while then proceeded to another section while waiting for their turn to tape.

It was freezing cold in the audience. Mark, the audience entertainer, talked to them, making funny scenarios of the Feud executives and staffers talking to the contestants.

The announcer, Burton Richardson, who also did the Arsenio Hall Show, performed several numbers with a cool Lou Rawls voice. The audience was briefed to show energy, clap, shout "\$10,000," sigh when a strike or wrong answer was given.

While on a lunch break, Maria A

asked how they picked the people they polled and how they got the answers. A staffer said they call people on the phone, two per state, and collate their answers.

During the taping itself, it was explained that the contestant producer picked only 1 out of 30 families per day. We were one of the fastest to qualify, from audition to taping.

The show's producer gave us a pep talk, saying we should all have fun and show energy because if we had fun, it translated to the audience who in turn had fun. The TV audience would continue to tune in and Family Feud would continue to air. If we had energy, the emcee picked it up and fed on that energy.

Sisons vs Falcones

Normally six episodes are scheduled in one taping.

Seven hours later at 6 p.m., we were doing our final preparations: retouching make-up, putting on our round name tags. We formed a circle of prayer and offered everything to the Lord.

The five Sison women were pitted against the Falcone family of Miami, Florida.

The Sison team captain, Maria F, an assistant manager of a Filipino bakeshop, introduced the other team members to the portly comedian-host, Louie Anderson.

She introduced her "superstitious" sister Maria M, "psychic" cousin Maria A, "sports buff" sister Maria R, and "sensual" cousin Terry.

The first question: Name something a real woman has that a Barbie

doll does not have.

Faye buzzed in first and gave "boobs." It was the no. 1 answer.

We got control of the question, which meant we could play or pass. My sister answered "navel," which wasn't in the survey answers. Maria A gave a brilliant answer, "brain," which was on the board. Maria R gave "kids," which didn't make it to the survey and gave us a second strike.

Terry answered "private parts," which made the survey. Maria F answered "husband," which was our third strike and gave the Falcones a chance to steal the accumulated points.

The Falcones gave the answer "internal organs," which netted them a strike and the Sisons earned the points. We were supporting each other, congratulating each other.

Clean sweep

Maria M was on for the second round. The question: Name something Ross Perot is known for.

She buzzed in immediately and gained control of the question. She said "a twangy voice," which was the no. 4 answer. The answer of the Falcones was "hair," which did not even make the board.

The team decided to play. Maria A answered "his height," which earned a strike. Then Maria R answered "he's rich," which was the no. 2 answer. Terry gave "his big ears," which was the no. 3 answer.

Only one answer was left and Maria F said "he's famous for the Presidential Reform Party." This was the no. 1 answer, earning the sisters and cousins a clean sweep of the answers.

Maria A was playing in the third round. The question: Name something people do that indicate they are cold.

The Falcones buzzed in first. They said "shivering," which was the no. 1 answer. They got control of the question. Another answer was "the nipples hardened," which was a good answer but didn't make the survey.

"Goose bumps" was another answer that made the

survey. On the second strike, the Sison five were in a huddle thinking of answers. The Falcones got a third strike and we got a chance to steal. Our answer was "chattering teeth," which was the no. 2 answer.

The score was 215 to 0.

The Falcones were losing energy, their captain was sweating profusely. But the Sison family was supportive of all answers given by both teams.

Previously, one of the families that had finished taping already won \$10,000 with this question: Name the time a person can go to the water after having a meal.

The second fastest-round player said an hour and it was worth 51 points, one point more than what was needed to make the required 200 points.

The verdict

The first family to reach 250 points goes on to play for \$10,000. Only one strike and the opposing family gets the chance to answer, steal the question and win the game.

It was Maria R's turn. The top three answers were on the board. You have to find the most popular answer to the question: Name something people buy by the gallon.

Maria R buzzed in immediately, faced host Louie and convincingly stated "milk." This was the no. 1 answer and was worth 53 points, multiplied by three for a total of 159 points.

Maria R asked Terry and the rest of the team if we would play. We would play.

Terry gave the no. 2 answer, which was "gas" and worth 22 points for a subtotal of 66. There was only one answer left.

Maria F gave a very good answer, "water." But that netted a strike.

The Falcones huddled. They gave the third answer, "ice cream," which was worth about 13 points. It was enough to gain the Falcones the chance to win \$10,000.

They were unable to get the required 200 points for the next round. But their point value was multiplied by \$5 for every point, for a total of more than \$700.

The Sisons formed a circle of prayer and thanked God for the experience. AS the Sisons walked away, the audience was waving to them, saying "Hi Maria, Maria, Maria, Maria and Terry." They were even singing "Maria."

Many people came up to us and said they felt water should've been the right answer.

At this point, it may be water under the bridge but we'll still take water, gallons of it, any day.

The staffers enjoyed us and the game show producer said, "We will call you back."



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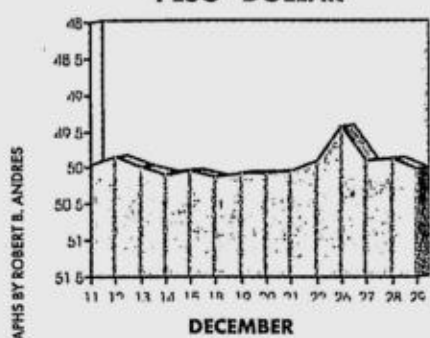
BUSINESS

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INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



Peso-Dollar Rate

P 50.01 = \$1
As of 5 p.m.,
Dec. 29, 2000

Y 114.90 = \$1
The US dollar was trading
at 114.90 as of 5 p.m.,
Dec. 29, 2000

GOLD: \$272.70/273.20
per ounce Hong Kong,
Dec. 29, 2000

STOCK MARKET

Dec. 29, 2000

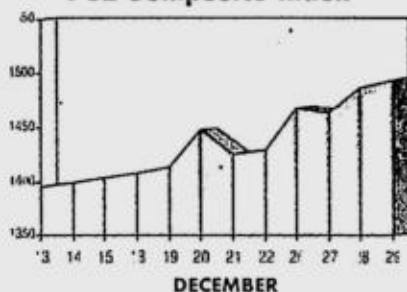
Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US\$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.075384	1.000000	49.9980
Japan	Yen	0.009396	0.008737	0.4368
United Kingdom	Pound	1.607700	1.495000	74.7470
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.137897	0.128230	6.4112
Switzerland	Franc	0.657888	0.611770	30.5873
Canada	Dollar	0.716828	0.666578	33.3276
Singapore	Dollar	0.621251	0.577701	28.8839
Australia	Dollar	0.593840	0.552212	27.6095
Bahrain	Dinar	2.852630	2.652661	132.6277
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.286770	0.266667	13.3328
Brunei	Dollar	0.619461	0.576037	28.8007
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000112	0.000104	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.024917	0.023170	1.1585
UAE	Dirham	0.292821	0.272294	13.6142
Korea	Won	0.000859	0.000799	0.0399
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.929900	46.4931
Germany	Deutsch	0.511292	0.475455	23.7715
France	Franc	0.152450	0.141762	7.0878
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.421970	21.0977
Austria	Schilling	0.072672	0.067578	3.3788
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.023052	1.1526
Italy	Lire	0.000516	0.000480	0.0240
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.156398	7.8196
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004638	0.2319
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005589	0.2794
Luxembourg	Franc	0.024790	0.023052	1.1526
Ireland	Punt	1.248230	1.160729	58.0341

Shares up

SHARES finished higher Friday, the last trading day of 2000, as investors sought to boost share prices to improve their portfolios in traditional year-end window dressing, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended up 8.04 points, or 0.5 percent, at 1,494.50, after gaining 1.5 percent Thursday. The index has fallen 30 percent since the start of the year, pressured by the political crisis and ensuing economic concerns that plagued the country throughout 2000.

PSE Composite Index



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Smart cited

SMART Communications Inc. has been cited as one of the Philippines' top 10 companies in an annual survey by the Far Eastern Economic Review, a leading Asian weekly magazine.

In this year's "Review 200" survey, a ranking conducted annually by the magazine of leading companies in Asia, Smart ranked 10th in overall performance among Philippine companies.

This is the second time in the past three years that Smart has figured in the Philippines' top 10 list. Fast-food giant Jollibee Foods Corp. has been ranked No. 1 for the third year in a row.

Administered by AC Nielsen International Research (Hong Kong), the survey, which is now in its eighth year, reflects readership perception of performances of over 500 companies in 11 Asian countries.

Victorias rehab pushed

VICTORIAS Milling Co. Inc. president and chief executive Manuel Mañalac has vowed to work for the approval of the sugar producer's proposed alternative rehabilitation plan.

In his letter of irrevocable resignation submitted to the VMC board Friday effective end-January next year, Mañalac said the alternative rehab plan of the clean creditors or the VMC management committee

was not viable.

"It has been ill-conceived and recommended by the management committee recommended by the Securities and Exchange Commission for fear of liquidation," Mañalac said.

Mañalac said he would use the one-month period prior to his resignation to fight for the VMC management rehabilitation plan and the presentation to all creditor banks of a proposed loan from a foreign lender.

INTEREST RATES

DAILY STATISTICAL INDICATORS
December 29, 2000

PARTICULARS	Today	Previous Day	Week Ago	Month Ago	Year Ago
Bangko Sentral R/P Rates (% p.a.) 1/					
29 December 2000					
Overnight R/P	15.7500	15.7500	15.7500	17.2500	O.H.
Term R/P	N.Q.	N.Q.	N.Q.	N.Q.	O.H.
Interbank Call Loan Rate (% p.a.)					
28 December 2000					
Weighted Ave.	13.5938	13.5938	13.5625	O.H.	O.H.
High	14.0000	14.0000	13.6250	O.H.	O.H.
Low	13.5625	13.5625	13.5625	O.H.	O.H.
Promissory Note Rates (% p.a.) 2/					
27 December 2000					
60 Days	14.0000	N.T.	N.T.	O.H.	O.H.
90 Days	N.T.	N.T.	N.T.	O.H.	O.H.
180 Days	N.T.	N.T.	N.T.	O.H.	O.H.
Foreign Interest Rates (% p.a.)					
90-day LIBOR	6.4000	6.4400	6.4600	6.7200	N.A.
90-day SIBOR	6.3800	6.4800	6.4800	6.7300	6.1800
180-day LIBOR	6.2000	6.2100	6.2500	6.6500	N.A.
180-day SIBOR	6.2100	6.2300	6.2700	6.6600	6.1700

1. Starting Oct. 30, 1997, Bangko Sentral R/P rates refer to the weighted average interest rate (WAIR) of transacted rates.
2. Of 10 sample commercial banks
N.Q.—No Quotation; N.T.—No Transaction
O.H.—Official Holiday

RP debt stock hits P2T

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

THE COUNTRY'S debt stock surged by a most P40 billion to P2.009 trillion as of end-August, from P1.969 trillion in the previous month, due largely to higher interest payments on foreign and local borrowings.

Based on government documents, total domestic liabilities accounted for 52.4 percent or P1.053 trillion of the total. This is up by P11.106 billion from the July level of P1.042 trillion.

Foreign obligations also swelled by P28.571 billion in August to P956.46 billion from P927.89 billion in the previous month. External debt accounted for 47.59 percent of the country's total debt stock.

National Treasurer Leonor Briones admitted that the increase in domestic obligations was due to increased borrowings used to finance the larger-than-projected budget deficit.

The government's budget gap soared to P14.438 billion as against the programmed level of P61 billion. The budget deficit last year was

expected to hit P125 billion, or double the original target of P62.5 billion.

The country's debt stock could worsen further the rest of the year considering the government's issuance of shorter-term, higher-yielding instruments called cash management bills in the third week of October to the third week of November.

The government borrows about P7 billion weekly in the form of treasury bills and bonds.

Briones said the peso fall versus the dollar also triggered an increase in the government's foreign debt stock. The peso suffered sharper depreciation after August as it fell to a historic low of 51.48 to \$1 on Oct. 30.

As against an average rate of 44.50 to 44.70 to \$1 in July, the peso slid to 45.146 to \$1 in August.

Based on government computation, for every P1 depreciation versus the greenback, the country's foreign debt servicing requirement goes up by P7 billion.

"The growth in the national government's

debt stock was caused by the movement in the peso-dollar exchange rate and our inability to borrow from the foreign market to bridge our substantial revenue shortfall," said Briones.

Still, the national treasurer said that the debt burden is being handled well by the government.

Briones said that in the early 1980s, debt servicing accounted for 50 to 60 percent of the yearly budget.

The debt stock, said Briones, included the government's local and foreign borrowings. It does not include the liabilities of the private sector.

Earlier, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported a drop in the country's foreign debt stock in the third quarter compared to the second-quarter level. Foreign debts in end-September amounted to \$51.85 billion, or \$320 million lower from \$52.164 billion in the first half of the year.

The BSP attributed the decline primarily to the continued rise in residents' investments in Philippine debt papers that were issued overseas.

Higher tariffs on cement imports sought

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

LOCAL cement manufacturers are asking the government to jack up the tariffs on cement currently pegged at 5 percent to repulse cheap imports from Taiwan and Japan.

A source from the Department of Trade and Industry said the tariff increase petition was on top of the Philippine Cement Manufacturers Corp.'s pending appeal to impose anti-dumping duties on Taiwan imports.

The DTI source said local cement makers were hoping that the tariff hike would put cement imports closer to their production prices.

Philcemcor has accused Taiwan and Japan cement manufacturers of dumping cement or selling their output at prices significantly lower than those prevailing in their home market.

The source said the cement industry was hoping to get a favorable response from the government considering recent policy moves to grant tariff protection to strategic industries like petrochemicals.

But the DTI source said a tariff increase would only burden consumers as it would be futile in protecting local cement makers from competition from cheap imports.

PCCI pushing for key reforms

THE PHILIPPINE Chamber of Commerce and Industry is pushing for key reforms to soften the impact of the current political crisis and improve growth prospects for 2001.

PCCI president Miguel B. Varela said the economy was expected to slow down in 2001 due to the effects of the political crisis on the domestic economy, the wait-and-see attitude of investors in the light of the impeachment trial and the projected slower growth of the US economy.

Varela said the projected slowdown of the US economy would reduce US demand for Asian exports and adversely affect intra-regional trade which is heavily dependent on the health of the re-export market. He added that investments into the region might decline as international portfolio managers react to the soft markets by becoming risk-averse abroad.

Despite the current political crisis, he said, the wheels of the economy must continue to turn. Whatever is the outcome of the impeachment trial, he stressed, the more critical aspect would be the implementation of economic reforms needed to put the economy back on track. These include:

- The lifting/relaxation of BSP prudential measures by re-defining the provisioning requirements for non-performing and sub-standard loans;
- Implementation of credible foreign investment promotion policies;
- Focusing spend-

PCCI/B2

"No one wants to take chances in eye surgery. That is why I chose American Eye Center."

Rep. Joker P. Arroyo
Representative, 1st District of Makati

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AMERICAN EYE CENTER

Facing a bank wall

IF, as they say, you face a blank wall, you can always destroy the wall. And this, precisely, is what we are trying to pull off in the banking system. It's our little bonus from the impeachment trial of the world's horniest man named Wrist Band.

As you are aware of by now, unless you do nothing but collect jueteng bets, our banking system still gets migraine from the Asian financial meltdown of 1997. All right, in the beginning, our banks fared much better than those in other countries in the region. Up to now, nevertheless, our banks have their share of problematic bad debts.

Luckily, the focus of attention in the impeachment trial already moved away from the dirty underground money of jueteng syndicates. In no time, the proceedings shifted to bank accounts. This development can help banks get rid of their bad debt problems. As summons were thrown about, just like that, the trial went on a fishing expedition for accounts suspected of linkage to the first letter of the fake name of Wrist Band. Who knows, after 142 million subpoenas duces tecum et ad testificandum, the proceedings should burrow deep enough into the banking system.

That's the day when all your bank accounts shall become as wide open a secret as the "jueteng" racket. So who will still want to keep money in banks? Without money, banks have no more business being banks. No banks, no bad loans! The problem is solved.

WORKING here is the same principle as the one in last week's bombings in Metro Manila. It's pure and simple—what else—"terror." Look, I am not the type to condemn bombings and senseless killings without ever having tried them even once in my life. It's just that I prefer listening to some blues songs.

Proverbially speaking? Anyway, we are hitting, two endangered-species birds with one stone wall or

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III



something like that. Let's say we can discover all the hidden bank accounts of Wrist Band simply by digging into the records of every bank from here to Takurom. Why, presto? we bring about his downfall!

At the same time? Because the banking system will have been destroyed by then, we can proudly tell the world that we also laid down the problem of bad loans in the banking system to rest. We don't have to worry about our bad credit ratings abroad. We don't have any more banking system to speak of, in the first place.

As it is, bad loans are such a big problem among banks that they are becoming extremely paranoid over lending out any more money. That's why, today the banks can probably consider lending you money to buy snacks, if you can actually prove beyond doubt that you don't need it.

TECHNICALLY called in banking as "non-performing," those billions of pesos worth of bad loans actually bring about other bad things. Take taxes, for instance. The government cannot collect taxes on bad loan write-off. And what about the idle assets of several companies? The government gets no tax payment for things like the Urban Bank Tower.

Look, even the RCBC group is trying to raise a lot of money for its real estate venture in Makati. I heard that the group was just sounding off some

banks for loan syndication for its firm called RCBC Properties. Oh, it's not much. Just P5 billion!

As you know, RCBC is a bank owned by the Yuchengco family. For its head office, the bank invested heavily in a twin-tower project in Makati, located on a spot which, according to the original zoning plan, should have been an open space. I wonder how the project got through the strict scrutiny of the Makati City Hall.

Anyway, it's the same project which already got the approval of the Wrist Band administration for tax exemption as a special economic zone. Imagine, a building, tax exempt! Even banks like RCBC try to avoid paying taxes.

SO as it is, banks already have such a big problem over bad loans. But so what? If more bank executives come out in the open to rat on their clients, the problem will soon be over. Nobody will trust the banks anymore.

I heard that Equitable PCIBank, for one, is bleeding deposits. It lost billions during the past few weeks. Unlike in bank runs in the past, nowadays people no longer go to branches to withdraw their money physically. They simply write checks to close their accounts. And the "run" in the bank is not expected to end.

Ironically, they said that as soon as the bank would have "cooperated" in the impeachment proceedings, it would earn back the trust and confidence of the public. Hmmm. Even if the head of its trust department volunteers to tell on clients?

Like it or not, people feel a certain ambivalence regarding the "bomb" dropped by the prosecution in the ongoing trial. Surely, the "antis" are overjoyed because it deducted pogi points from Wrist Band. Then again, many others wonder how in the world can they trust their lifetime savings in this kind of a banking system. Now we face a bank wall.

Philippine Stock Exchange

STOCKS	(As of Friday, December 29, 2000)				VOLUME
	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	8.20	8.3	8	8	22,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	58.00	58.5	58	58	304,700
Chinabrust Comm. Bank	18.25	18.25	18.25	18.25	30,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	58.50	59	57.5	59	1,056,100
Global Business Bank Inc.	80.00	80	80	80	20,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	183.00	184	182	183	176,330
Philippine National Bank	36.00	38	36	38	2,200
Phil. Savings Bank	29.00	30	29	30	3,600
Rizal Comm'l Bkg. Corp. "A"	24.00	30	24	30	9,000
Security Bank Corp.	23.50	28	23.5	28	808,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	24.50	34	24.5	34	140,400
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.60	1.6	1.54	1.54	476,000
First Abacus Financial	.6000	.7	.6	.7	210,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	250.0	250	250	250	200
Manulife Financial Corp.	1510	1545	1510	1530	6,850
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.22	1.24	1.22	1.24	200,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1260	1295	1260	1280	35,770
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	48.50	50	48.5	49.5	462,000
Diversified Fin. Network	8.80	10.25	8.8	10.25	18,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	1.4500	.46	.45	.46	870,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	685.0	700	670	700	1,000,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	4.20	4.2	3.9	4.2	50,000
Philat	.5800	.58	.56	.56	15,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	850.0	875	850	865	85,830
Int'l Container Term'l SV	.9000	.9	.89	.89	160,000
Philweb Corp. Inc.	.0430	.043	.041	.042	67,100,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. "A"	49.00	49	48.5	49	95,800
Manila Electric Co. "B"	50.50	50.5	49.5	49.5	1,991,500
Pelron Corp.	1.24	1.26	1.2	1.2	3,231,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.06	1.12	1.06	1.12	1,327,000
Int'l Container Term'l SV	.7900	.79	.78	.78	180,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	7100	71	71	71	1,091,350,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	.3700	.37	.36	.36	980,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.350	1.35	1.35	1.35	90,000
Union Cement Corp.	.5000	.7	.45	.7	3,530,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	9.60	9.7	9.6	9.7	312,000
La Tondela Distillers Inc.	30.00	30.5	30	30.5	111,000
Pancake House Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	2,000
Pure Foods Corp. "A"	80.00	90	80	90	3,400
Pure Foods Corp. "B"	90.00	90	90	90	1,000
RFM Corp.	1.00	1	1	1	320,000
Swift Food Inc.	1.00	1	1	1	20,000
San Miguel Corp. "A"	48.00	48.5	47.5	48.5	85,600
San Miguel Corp. "B"	54.00	55.5	54	55.5	317,800
Vitarich Corp.	.4000	.4	.4	.4	110,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con. Res. & Hdg. "A"	.4900	.49	.48	.48	20,000
Abacus Con. Res. & Hdg. "B"	.5300	.53	.53	.53	10,000
Ayala Corp.	7.60	7.7	7.5	7.7	5,788,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.75	13.25	11.75	13.25	68,800
A. Soriano Corp.	.2800	.28	.24	.24	310,000
APC Group Inc.	1.600	1.6	1.6	1.6	130,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.04	2.12	2.04	2.12	521,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	2.00	2.06	2	2.06	82,000
Bacnotans Cons. Indus. Inc.	13.50	13.5	13.5	13.5	1,500
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.05	3.05	2.9	2.9	1,135,000
Southeast Asian Cement	.2000	.2	.2	.2	50,000
Holdings Inc.	.2800	.28	.27	.27	1,000,000
Ever-Golaseco Resources	.0500	.05	.05	.05	400,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	.6600	.66	.66	.66	30,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	21.00	21	20.75	20.75	54,900
Forum Pacific Inc.	.3600	.36	.34	.34	600,000
Global Equities Inc.	.6800	.68	.68	.68	90,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	14.75	15.75	14.5	15.75	2,462,700
House of Investments Inc.	.1000	.1	.1	.1	10,000
Ipsos Inc.	.208	.208	.208	.208	47,000
Ipsos Inc. "B"	2.10	2.1	2.1	2.1	40,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	.210	.21	.21	.21	40,000
Macro Asia Corp.	.210	.21	.21	.21	40,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. "A"	.210	.21	.21	.21	40,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. "B"	.210	.21	.21	.21	40,000
Medco Holdings	.8000	.8	.78	.8	360,000
Megawatt Corp.	.5800	.58	.57	.57	26,910,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	.5100	.53	.51	.52	140,000
Solid Group Inc.	5.50	5.5	5.5	5.5	20,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	.5500	.55	.51	.51	5,170,000
Unwided Holdings Inc.	.4800	.48	.49	.49	520,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	.3700	.37	.35	.35	1,850,000
Zeus Holdings Inc.	.3000	.3	.3	.3	180,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Matsushita Elec. Phil. Corp.	4.30	6	4.3	6	2,000
Macondray Plastics Inc.	6.40	6.4	6.4	6.4	40,000
Max Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.85	2.85	4,500
Picop Resources Inc.	1.150	1.15	1.15	1.15	600,000
Pryce Corp.	.6900	.82	.69	.82	250,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	6.90	6.9	6.9	6.9	10,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	7.60	7.7	7.6	7.7	93,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Bella Corp.	.6900	.7	.69	.69	3,400,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	.8000	.85	.76	.83	5,600,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	4.500	4.5	4.4	4.4	3,100,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	1.650	1.65	1.6	1.6	340,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	49.00	49.5	49	49	625,000
Equitable PCI Bank-War	3.10	3.15	3	3	382,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (PDR)	685.0	700	685	700	4,500
Jollibee Warrants	9.20	9.3	9.2	9.3	180,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	.0028	.0028	.0026	.0026	12,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.00	10	10	10	2,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	12,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series U	10.25	11	10.25	11	8,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	11.00	11	11	11	1,600
PLDT 10% Pref Series "Aa"	9.60	9.6	9.6	9.6	2,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.50	5.6	5.4	5.4	14,018,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	3.700	.36	.32	.32	400,000
Cityland Development Corp.	2.50	2.7	2.7	2.7	2,000
C & P Homes Inc.	.2000	.2	.19	.19	3,200,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	.4200	.42	.42	.42	40,000
Empire East Land Inc.	1.300	.32	.31	.31	16,500,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.34	1.36	8,727,000
Golaseco Land Inc.	.0575	.0575	.0575	.0575	100,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.10	1.1	1.1	1.1	121,494,000
City & Land Developers	2.40	2.4	2.4	2.4	2,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	.1350	.135	.125	.135	130,000
SM Development Corp.	.8500	.85	.82	.82	500,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.90	5.9	5.6	5.8	10,970,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	.0900	.09	.08	.08	900,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	.0050	.005	.005	.005	9,000,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	.0050	.005	.005	.005	6,000,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. "A"	.1950	.195	.195	.195	1,000,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. "B"	.1950	.195	.195	.195	200,000
Omico Corp.	.0038	.0038	.0038	.0038	285,000,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	.1500	.15	.15	.15	150,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	.0230	.023	.023	.023	5,000,000
Interport Res.	.0050	.0065	.005	.0065	4,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. "A"	.0044	.0044	.0042	.0042	13,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. "B"	.0042	.0042	.0042	.0042	6,000,000
Pacific	.0150	.015	.014	.014	9,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l.	.1900	.19	.19	.19	500,000
SHARES					
Banks & Fin Svc	42,757.132				3,903,383,905.80
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,248,614.090				1,220,142,040.00
PRO	177,014.000				292,516,830.00
Mining	301,350.000				1,414,500.00
OIL	37,500.000				441,300.00
GRAND TOTALS:	1,807,235.222				5,417,898,575.80
AVERAGES					
Banks & Fin Svc	554.08				UP16.80
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,104.54				UP22.65
PRO	508.17				DOWN 8.52
Mining	1,245.08				DOWN 6.54
OIL	1.73				DOWN 0.32
All Shares Index	829.93				UP23.32
NO. OF ADVANCES: 47; NO. OF DECLINES: 38; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 35;					
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 120; NO. OF TRADES: 3,369					

BSP sees microfinance license

BY CLARISSA S. BATINO

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is set to grant banking licenses next year to private firms that plan to engage in microfinance.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said existing banks, especially thrift and rural lenders, can also apply for an expansion of their operations to include microfinance.

Buenaventura said micro lending would be one of the BSP's major programs next year along with the mergers and consolidations of medium-sized banks.

According to the draft circular, the BSP would open a rediscount window for firms engaged in microfinance. The terms may be lower than the usual one percentage point above the 91-day treasury bill rate.

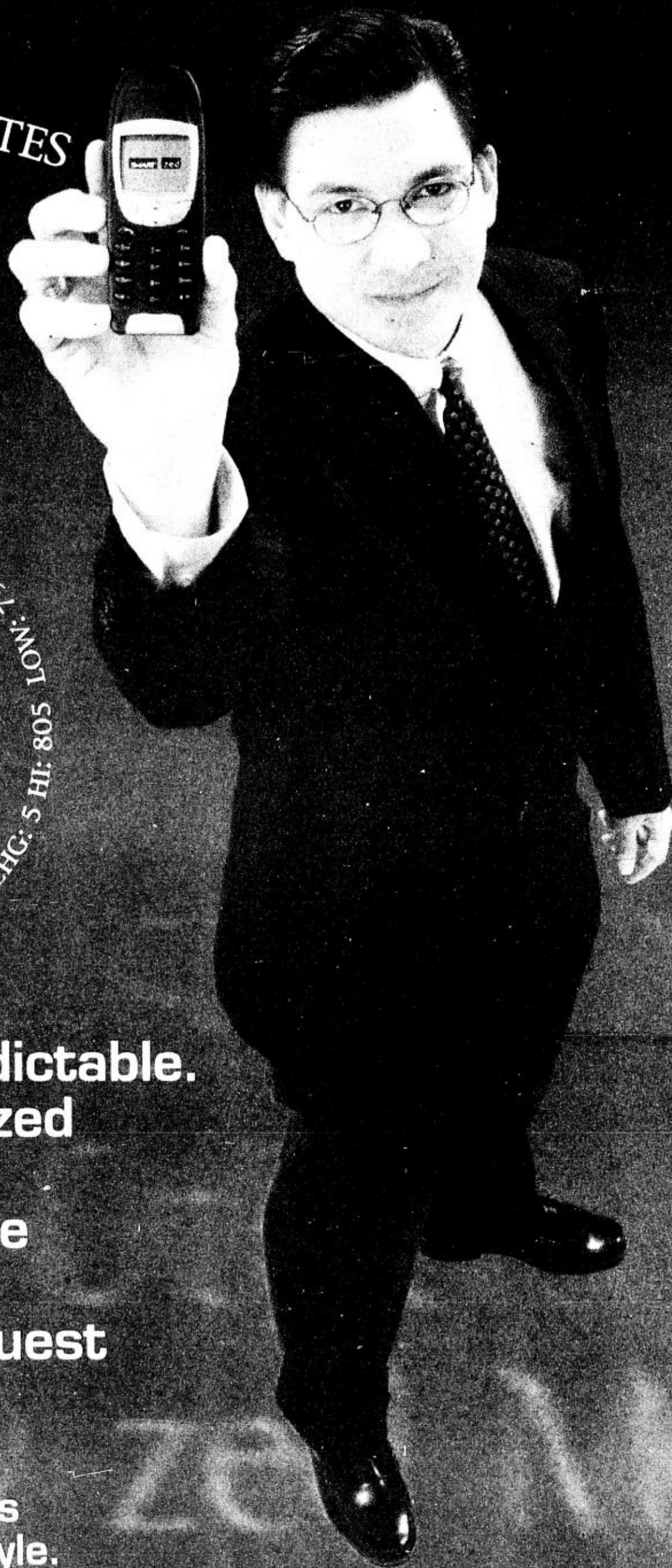
"This is part of our thrust to help small enterprises," Buenaventura said.

The BSP said loans amounting to a maximum of P150,000 are considered microfinance.

The People's Credit and Finance Corp., a state-run microfinance institution attached to the Office of the President, is expected to oppose the circular saying that there would be a duplication of functions.

Orlando Sakay, chair and chief executive officer of People's Credit and Finance Corp. said BSP would be the only central bank in Asia that would implement a micro finance

12:09:21 PM MY STOCK UPDATES
 VAL: 158, 42M VOL: 198, 480 AS OF 12/08/00
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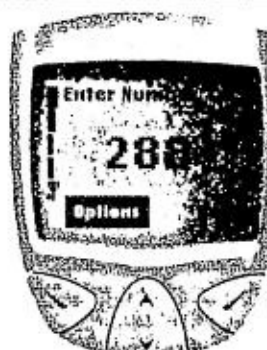
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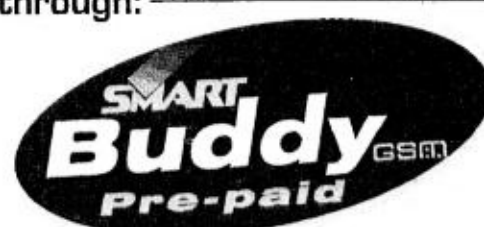
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People, Events & Products

REZ GOPEZ-SINDAC, Editor

Citibank helps build school library for street children

CITIBANK is giving former street children the gift of hope by making a special donation to finance the establishment of the school library at the soon-to-open Tuloy sa Don Bosco Street Children Village in Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

As part of Citigroup, Inc., the result of the 1988 merger of Citicorp and Travelers Group, Citibank is a truly global financial services company with established offices in over a hundred countries. Cited this year 2000 as the Best Foreign Commercial Bank by Finance Asia and the Best Foreign Bank by Euromoney, Citibank not only leads in

the business sector but is also at the forefront of socio-civic events. Citibank recently funded and built 10 houses for the homeless at the Christian Habitat Village in Las Piñas through Habitat for Humanity Philippines.

For the past five years, Citibank has been helping the Tuloy Foundation Inc. give a better life to former homeless street children from all over Metro Manila. This year, Citibank's donation will be used to equip the school library with much needed books, personal computers, a color printer and many other teaching supplies and materials.

Established in 1993 by

Fr. Rocky Evangelista, SDB, the Tuloy Foundation Inc. provides an answer to the growing problem of street children in the metropolis. Currently with 133 children under its care, Tuloy believes in long-term programs that not only provide these children with relief today, but also help them become responsible citizens.

Starting this school year, 2001-2002, the new library will give the children at the Tuloy sa Don Bosco Street Children Village and those of their partner orphanages, an opportunity to reach their maximum learning potentials.



FR. ROCKY Evangelista of the Tuloy Foundation (fourth from left) receives the check donation from Citibank country corporate officer Catherine M. Weir (center) and the Citibank Private Bank country manager Richard J. Smith II (fourth from right), together with Citibankers (from left) Bhe Santos, Renee Rubio, Cecile Padilla, Mon Santos, Vanee Ocampo and Li-Lian Tan, as witnessed by some of the children under Tuloy's care.

More students abroad for CAP College

ONE of the country's pioneers in the distance learning field, CAP College Foundation, Inc. marks another milestone with its number of students abroad reaching the 101st tally.

Fifty-nine overseas Filipino workers (OFW) situated in Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia, areas where most OFWs are based, have been studying under the distance education system of CAP College. Other Asian countries with CAP College enrollees include Thailand, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Brunei and Singapore, while the rest can be found in New Jersey, Illinois and California in the U.S., Chile, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Portugal, Belgium and Australia.

CAP College's presence in the international arena signifies the growing interest in distance education as a fitting and effective alternative conventional formal schools.

CAP College began 12 years ago with a vision of providing opportu-

nities for higher learning for those who cannot afford to earn quality tertiary education on account of time, distance and other circumstances. Aside from overseas workers, CAP College likewise caters to local working individuals both from the private and government sectors, busy housewives, senior citizens, physically-challenged individuals, college drop-outs and even fresh high school graduates.

Students abroad receive their package of print modules and learner support collaterals consisting of print reviewers, audiocassettes and video-enhanced learning modules (VELMODS) depending on the course in which they are enrolled in. They communicate and submit module tests via airmail, phone, fax or email, while final examinations are taken at the nearest Philippine embassy or consulate.

Interested parties may call CAP College at 892-6395 or 810-9142.



NEW FAVORITE

Figaro Coffee in LPL Greenhills (behind Club Filipino) is now a favorite hangout of young college students from schools in the area. The place is spacious enough for small meetings over cups of authentic Cappuccino and Figaro's banner product, Figaro Frost. Light meals such as sandwiches, pasta and pizza are also available. Call 727-5049 for deliveries and reservations or visit www.figarocoffee.com. This branch is open from breakfast until midnight.

Calcium supplement makes no bones about osteoporosis

MANY Filipino women are now taking calcium supplements, with a number of calcium-enhanced products marketed exclusively for women. This is a good thing, of course, health-wise.

The number one reason for taking calcium supplements is to prevent osteoporosis, the dreaded bone-thinning disease that affects four times as many women than men. Osteoporosis affects more than 75 million people in the US, Europe and Japan.

There is little argument that the majority of women do not get enough calcium from their diet—even in countries where calcium-rich dairy products are already consumed in large quantities. In the United States, for example, osteoporosis causes an estimated 1.5 million fractures annually, mostly fractured vertebrae and hip fractures.

Thus, the growing awareness for calcium supplements. But not all calcium supplements are of equal benefit to the user. The product is of little use, for example, if your body cannot absorb it properly (this means, quite literally, money down the drain).

Fortunately, there is one brand of calcium

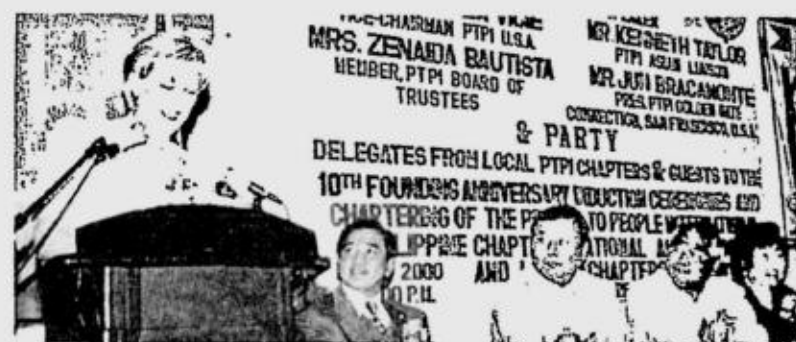
supplement that not only gives you calcium, but helps you optimize its absorption as well.

The brand is Caltrate Plus. Each tablet of Caltrate Plus has 600 mg of calcium, a hundred percent of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) set by the Department of Health for Filipinos.

Caltrate Plus also contains vitamin D and five other minerals important for healthy bone formation: magnesium, zinc, copper, manganese, and boron.

Magnesium is directly involved in bone metabolism. Zinc has been demonstrated in some studies to have a stimulatory effect on bone growth. Copper, when taken along with calcium, may reduce age-related bone-loss. Manganese has also been shown to aid in proper bone development. Boron is intimately involved in bone metabolism.

Most women can improve their bone health and reduce the risk of osteoporosis with a sensible, regular exercise program. And calcium, of course—do try to include it in your diet. Chances are your calcium intake still won't be enough, but Caltrate Plus with vitamin D and minerals is the easy, convenient—and absorbable—way to fill the gap.



PEACE MISSION IN RP

CEO Mary Jean Eisenhower of People to People International (PTPI) delivers her keynote address at the 10th founding anniversary of the organization's Philippine Chapters National Association and induction of officers in Angeles City recently. Mary Jean is the granddaughter of former US President Dwight Eisenhower, who founded People to People International in 1956 to promote understanding between people of all nations. Listening intently are (from left) Quezon City Central Chapter president and P-II Builders chair Reghis M. Romero II, Angeles City vice mayor Ricardo Zalamea, Angeles City Chapter president and PTPI Philippine Chapters National Association member of the board of trustees Romero Calara and PTPI board member Zenaida Bautista.



PACT RENEWAL

The US Commercial Service enters into a partnership agreement with Worldbox Services International (WSI) for the second straight year. Under the agreement, the Commercial Service of the US Embassy will promote Worldbox 2001 in the United States and campaign for the participation of more American companies in the exhibit, which is slated on March 14-18, 2001. On the other hand, WSI will create a pavilion in the construction of super-expo that will effectively showcase the top-of-the-line building and construction products of US companies. Signing the agreement are US counselor for commercial affairs George Ruffner and WSI president Joseph Ang. Looking on are US commercial attaché Robert Bannerman and WSI executive director Francisco Flamenjo Jr.



AGRI AND FOOD MEET

Agriculture secretary Edgardo Angara (third from left) turns over to Col. Alex T. Escario, president of the Phil. Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. (PACFI), the DA's answer to the resolution and concerns gathered from the workshop of the convention. Occasion was the opening day of the International Agriculture and Food twin shows held at the World Trade Center in Pasay City. Others in photo are (from left) Nemesio Go, PACFI executive vice president; Felix Gonzales, executive director-PACFI; Manuel Lim Jr., PACFI past president and Antonio Rocas, PACFI director and FRDL president, and guest.

Leadsinger: The band in your hand

SAY goodbye to the days when you had to have a karaoke system beside you to be able to sing like a professional singer. Now, with the Leadsinger, you can sing anytime, anywhere.

Exclusively distributed in the Philippines by AV Value Sales Corporation, the Leadsinger is the first handheld wireless karaoke system that works with any FM radio station. It works everywhere—even in cars as long as there's an FM radio.

The Leadsinger is the latest in state-of-the-art technology; it plays all your favorite songs while you sing the vocals. There's no need for minus-one tapes because the songs are programmed into the microphone. Every Leadsinger has

8100 pre-programmed songs that come with a book of lyrics. Selections include songs from the 80s and 90s, R&B, rock and roll, disco, standards and kiddies' songs, among others.

Leadsinger is available at the following stores: David Sony Shop (Makati Pasong Tamo, SM Megamall, SM City-Cebu, Festival Supermall-Alabang and Makati-Quid); The AV Center (Ali Mall, Bacoor, Balintawak and Alabang Town Center), call Audio-Video Shop (Robinson's Galleria) Beyond (Alabang Town Center and soon to open at Farmer's Plaza) and AVSurfer.com, the company's website.

For more information about the Leadsinger, call 361-2083.



MILO WINS ARAW VALUES AWARD

Milo the Olympic Energy Drink recently received the prestigious Araw Values Award from the Advertising Board of the Philippines (AdBoard) for its "Respect" TV commercial. AdBoard cited Milo for promoting and communicating the Filipino value respect for law and authority in the commercial created by ad agency Publicis-AMA. Shown with the Araw Award are (from left) Lenore Eneiro, senior copywriter of Publicis-AMA; Andrew Bramston, vice president for coffee and beverages of Nestlé Philippines, makers of Milo; Chat Zagala, creative director of Publicis-AMA; Iggy Alvarez, brand manager for Milo and Charmaine Campafer, associate account group manager of Publicis-AMA.



THE TIE UP

Teddy Kingsu, VP and general manager of Uni-Air Phil. Inc. (right) and Ernest Panis, consumers and office markets group manager of 3M Phil Inc. sign a contract on a tie-up promo campaign wherein 3M Filtrite will be given away free with any Uni-Air Window Type Room air conditioner. Looking on are (from left) Arlene Ng, finance head of Uni-Air; Liza Brown, marketing specialist of 3M; and Jeanne Ty, sales admin and head of Uni-Air.



ROBINSONS-ABENSON JOINT VENTURE

Robinsons, one of the country's biggest retail conglomerates (with Robinsons Land Corp., Robinsons Supermarket Corp., Robinsons Dept. Store, Robinsons Recreation and Big "R"), and Abenson, the country's biggest appliance network, recently launched a joint venture to formalize the introduction of Robinsons-Abenson Appliance Center. Formalizing the merger during an open forum are Robinsons-Abenson, Inc. officers (from left) Frederick Go, vice chair; Lance Gokongwei, chair and Wilson Lim, president.



SADAC

University of San Carlos, Dean Ricardo Sadac, CRC president, said an advanced pre-bar review is also ongoing in Manila until April 8, 2001 at Suites 804-809 Ermita Building, Roxas Blvd., Manila. The holding of the advanced pre-bar review in the University of San Carlos will provide law students and graduates in Cebu and the neighboring provinces who have difficulties in reviewing in Manila with adequate preparation for the 2001 bar examinations.

Pre-bar review

ONGOING until April 1, 2001 in Cebu City is the advanced pre-bar review for 2001 bar examinations being conducted by the Cosmopolitan Review Center (CRC), in partnership with the

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MAKATI

Creba to high court: Review bad check prison deletion

THE CHAMBER of Real Estate and Builders' Associations Inc. (Creba) has urged the Supreme Court to reconsider its recent circular deleting the penalty of imprisonment for bouncing checks, as it poses grave legal and economic implications apart from encouraging violations of the Bouncing Checks Law.

Batas Pambansa 22 penalizes the issuance of bouncing checks with either imprisonment or fine, or both, subject to the discretion of the courts.

However, Creba said, Supreme Court Administrative Circular 12-2000 issued by Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. calls on all courts and judges to impose only the penalty of fine, thus effectively removing the element of court discretion in the choice of penalty, regardless of the circumstances of a particular case.

In effect, Creba said, this circular serves to amend the law by "decriminalizing" the issuance of bouncing checks.

If allowed to stand, this circular would set a dangerous precedent for "judicial legislation" or infringement on legislative prerogative, which is not allowed under the Constitution, Creba said.

However harsh the law may be, Creba said, the court's proper role under our tripartite system of government is merely to interpret, and not to amend it for whatever end.

While certain bouncing-check cases might call for court leniency, Creba said, this should be no reason for a blanket removal of the criminal deterrence that Congress—in its wisdom as the supreme lawgiver—has prescribed.

From the economic side, Creba said, this policy would constrict

economic activity as it would undermine the acceptability of check payments in transactions involving long-term financing, in view of the fear that mere fines would not serve to deter the unscrupulous from issuing bouncing checks.

The criminal penalty imposed under BP 22 is as much a boon for majority of the cash-strapped population, as it is a threat to the unscrupulous, Creba said.

It is this criminal penalty that has engendered greater faith in the use of checks rather than cash as mode of payment, Creba said, and which has in turn enabled a much greater volume of trade that the economy badly needs.

Check-based transactions have become indispensable particularly in the case of high-priced items such as housing and other capital goods which are necessarily sold on

installment, Creba said, in view of the affordability factor as well as the relative safety from robbery or hold-ups to which cash transactions are prone.

However, Creba said, the court policy would now compel a reversion to cash-based transactions due to the very real danger that check issuers would be encouraged to dishonor contracts, considering that regardless of how many times their checks bounce, the worst that they would suffer is to pay the fine.

Particularly for the housing sector, Creba said, this policy could cause the collapse of the housing finance system which is anchored entirely on installment payments, even as it would place upon the government the entire burden of home financing, since developers would veer away from their own in-house financing.



IN-HOUSE AGENT

Central Country Estate Inc., owner and developer of The Lakeshore, recently signed a contract with The Lakeshore Marketing Corp. as its in-house agent to market the 245-hectare residential, commercial and institutional real property estate. The Lakeshore, which is located at Km 71 North of Manila, is envisioned to be the future leisure hub. From left are TLMC president Jesus Cauquian and CCEI president and CEO architect Nestor S. Mangio.

SEASCAPE GARDENS

Proximity and space in urbanized Manila

PROXIMITY and space—the major selling points of real estate property—will be redefined by the latest development project rising quietly along Manila Bay.

Now on its tenth floor with model units being prepared for a public viewing, the twin-tower project is known as Seascape Gardens. Upon completion in August this year, Seascape Gardens will be a 167-unit residential condominium that will stand as the second building in the Metropolitan Park.

Metropolitan Park is a 40-hectare project developed by Federal Homes of the Metrobank group of companies. Seascape Gardens is developed by Baywatch Realty Corp., a joint venture of Mitsui & Co. of Japan and Federal Homes Inc. It is the first major property development in the expanded area of Manila Bay, which is under Boulevard 2000, a government-private sector venture.

The first structure that launched Metropolitan Park was the Toyota Manila Bay Automobile Showroom which opened late last year at the corner of Edsa-Roxas Boulevard next to the entrance of the 40-hectare project.

Seascape Gardens is expected to redefine the points of proximity and open space—two major features that make Metropolitan Park a surprise property offering in the urbanized district of Metro Manila.

The residential condominium is less than 10 kilometers away from the business centers of Makati, Manila and Parañaque, and is at the doorstep of two expressways that lead to other developing areas: the South Luzon Tollway leading to the Calabarzon area, and the Coastal Highway to the towns of Cavite.

The "space" factor as a major feature of Seascape Gardens refers to indoor and outdoor space. Metropolitan Park is being



A GRAND high-ceiling lobby provides an elegant receiving area.

developed as a "garden city" with a variety of parks, water features, plazas and promenades linking the different zones—all of these located across the urbanized side of Roxas Boulevard.

"The developer has allotted a 60-40 ratio of open space to structures to emphasize nature in this garden city," said Chan Say Lim, the Singaporean project manager. "To complement this open space feature, the project will have an open-air swimming pool with cascading waterfalls, resort-type landscaping with fountain, and a jogger's path."

Inside the building, space is another luxury. A grand high-ceiling lobby provides an elegant receiving area. There are only about seven units per floor and a total of 86 units to a tower. The seven units will share three elevators that will eliminate waiting time in the hallway.

Space inside each condo unit

proclaims a lifestyle—from the 52 sq. m. for the 1-bedroom; 96 sq. m. for the 2-bedroom; 122 sq. m., 3-BR; to the 168-sq. m., 3-BR executive deluxe units.

Each unit is dressed with luxurious finishing features: homogenous tiles for the living and dining rooms and kitchen flooring; narra parquet for bedroom flooring; two coats of paint for the ceiling and walls. The bathroom continues the luxury or space feature, providing high-quality fixtures, a bathtub and separate shower stall to allow two people to use these at the same time.

Under all this development, Baywatch has given the reclaimed area a "structural integrity" that exceeds accepted standards.

L & M Maxco of Singapore, the foundation contractor, used a combination of matting platform and concrete bored piling foundation

system to ensure extra safety and peace of mind of its residents, Chan said.

"Seascape Gardens has gone an extra mile by adding an extra 1.5-meter thick mat platform to complement its already structurally safe and sound bored piling system. Together with structural expert Aromin & Sy, who is the consultant of many high-rise developments, L&M Maxco of Singapore and Sumitomo Construction of Japan have combined forces for the technical design, providing one of the only few projects with a mat platform and bored piling combination," Chan explained.

Federal Homes is the real estate arm of the Metrobank group of Companies involved in the marketing of many high-rise condominiums and offices in Makati, Mandaluyong and Downtown Manila.

Housing courses to professionalize real estate trade

MORE schools are expected to offer undergraduate courses on real estate management during the opening of the first semester sometime in June next year.

This was the assessment made by Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council chair Leonora V. de Jesus as more schools have shown interest in the real estate programs.

The proposal of the government shelter sector for schools to offer Bachelor of Science degrees in real estate management is aimed at professionalizing the real estate industry and do away with malpractices perpetrated by some industry practitioners on the average house seekers.

According to De Jesus, for example, "counterfeit land titles are wreaking havoc with the real estate business, that is why we thought that offering college degrees on real estate management will make it less vulnerable to fraud and deception."

The presidential housing adviser revealed that her efforts have the endorsement of a big portion of the housing sector, especially the National Real Estate Association and the Subdivision and Housing Developers Association.

The NREA, for one, De Jesus added, had already started talks with various business schools, colleges and universities. It will explore the feasibility of pilot-testing the integration of real estate management in regular courses like commerce or accountancy.

The NREA vision, however, is for real estate management to evolve into a full-degree course.

The NREA earlier this year signed a memorandum of agreement with the Pangasinan-based Lyceum Northwestern for the implementation of the innovative approach to bring real estate management to the classroom.

De Jesus said graduates of this novel course are assured a better chance at "making it big" in the housing industry.

The NREA has vowed to provide graduates of the course with opportunities available in the business, while coordinating with other real estate corporations and associations and guiding the graduates toward a lucrative career path in real estate.

The proposal to professionalize the housing industry through a regular course on real estate management is part of the HUDCC's campaign to rid the industry of misfits and profiteers.

CONSTRUCTSCOPE

1st CEP seminar for 2001

THE PASAY-MAKATI Realtors Board Inc. will conduct for its members, associates and friends the "Ultimate Continuing Education Program" on Jan. 13 and Jan. 20 (both with 8-hour CEP credits) from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at the 2nd floor, Claro Room, Max's Restaurant, Greenbelt Park, Makati City. The CEP seminar is part of the PMRB program needed for the renewal of license of real estate brokers.

Interesting subjects to be discussed are property management, land title fraud, real estate taxation, contract documentation and registration, laws relating to real estate development, property development, legal aspects of sale, lease and mortgage, and appraisal fundamentals for real estate brokers. Interested parties may call up the PMRB secretariat at 893-0569 and 893-0585 or e-mail at pmrb@broline.com or visit the PMRB offices at Unit 502-P Parking Building, Cityland 10, H.V. dela Costa Street, Ayala Avenue, Makati City. The two-day series of seminars satisfies the 16-hour requirement for CEP accreditation necessary for license renewal.

Worry-free housing more accessible

NAREL Homes, the firm that introduced the easy and worry-free concept in house construction, is targeting to further expand its market by the start of the year. It is responsible for offering a convenient alternative in homebuilding that utilizes a new technology and provides a wide range of services, which include acquisition of permits, architectural and structural designs, construction management and a 20-year structural warranty. As part of its intensified marketing campaign, product briefings are being conducted which are open to lot owners, real estate agents and brokers, company personnel working on employee housing program and individuals looking for affordable house and lot packages. Information centers are being set up in various commercial and business establishments. Linkages with real estate developers who have declared their subdivisions ready for housing have also been initiated. Interested parties may call up Darwin at 634-7935, 412-4109 or 0917-9866586.

Armitage Shanks brass fittings

AMERICAN Standard, world leader in the manufacture of quality bathroom fixtures, launched the newest member of its family—Armitage Shanks brass fittings—at an exhibit in the recently concluded 9th national conference of the United Architects of the Philippines. Armitage Shanks was established in 1817 and is among the most established and most prestigious brand of brass fittings in Europe. It is precision crafted from solid brass and equipped with a ceramic disc valving system—an engineering breakthrough that ensures they remain drip-free for life.

2000 a very good year for Crown Asia

CROWN Asia remained the dominant middle-income property developer for the year 2000 despite the country undergoing an economic crisis because of homegrown political events as well as a region-wide currency crisis in Southeast Asia.

As the undisputed middle-income property developer, Crown Asia broke new ground not only because it remained the preferred choice of middle-income earners buying their first home, but also because of the innovative steps the real property developer undertook to market its variety of homes and subdivisions.

It has been the trademark of Crown Asia to embark on master-planning all its developments. The company would rather go the extra mile before starting construction than jeopardize the safety of the would-be residents.

Another aspect is Crown Asia's continued search to improve the technology it incorporates into its housing construction. Among the many innovations it introduced this year was the use of steel rafters for the support beams of the roof of the houses. Using steel instead of wood ensures that it is virtually

termite proof and built to last.

Crown Asia also conducted ongoing skills training program for new and old contractors through its technical department. The modules offered include basic masonry, plumbing, carpentry, painting and roofing plus the latest techniques and technology in construction. Upon finishing the program, each participant will undergo trade testing which follows the construction management development standards. Regular seminars ensue to further enhance the skills of the workers.

Crown Asia was also the preferred choice of brokers, agents and property consultants as the firm's ever-increasing sales network would suggest.

The Crown Asia network has been the biggest in the industry because of the different packages and incentives it offers to brokers. These include the hosting of monthly, quarterly, semiannual and annual awards incentives and also the training and seminars that would enhance the talents and work of their sales people.

The only choice in middle-income housing also embarked on non-traditional way of marketing and advertising. A photo exhibit featuring

top-caliber photographer Raul J. Teehankee and his look into the concept and lifestyle in two of Crown Asia's premiere housing estates—Maia Alta and Cottonwood Heights in Antipolo City—started the series of exhibits that went on display in various venues.

Another innovation by Crown Asia is its maximized use of its booths in the different malls in Metro Manila. Crown Asia booths located at SM Megamall, SM City North Edsa, SM City Fairview, Alimall, Araneta Center and Farmers in Cubao are manned by competent staffers who have access to the Internet for faster coordination with the main office.

Of their main office on Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City, they were able to undertake full computerization of all their departments, integrating them into one super efficient system.

Crown Asia employees directly involved with frontline services for customers underwent an intensive three-month training course to familiarize them with the computer system and software used by the property firm. Their website—www.crownasia.com.ph—allowed customers to go through a page featuring the different subdivisions

and house models of Crown Asia and also allowed for an online inquiry about financing rates and house-and-lot prices through a fast e-mail response system.

Crown Asia also realigned its price scale for its subdivisions, making them more reflective of the prevailing economic situation. This realignment included putting in additional discounts for buyers and adding more home model choices for first-time homebuyers.

In sum, the year 2000 has been a very good year proving the formidable force of the Crown Asia in the real property sector.

For 2001, Crown Asia will be embarking on a massive expansion of its sales network as it prepares for the launch of bigger and better housing estates in choice areas in line with its commitment to provide homes for the Filipino.

Aside from these, the leading middle-income property builder will continue its improvement of support services such as management of subdivisions, and the construction of houses and its housing estates and its customers services such as those involving finances and the computerization of its network and offices.

Annual plumber's training workshop held

Garden Hotel, Subic Bay Freeport Zone.

The annual workshop was organized by Delta Faucet to foster professional growth among local plumbers by keeping them up to date with the latest plumbing techniques and other developments in the plumbing industry. During the

workshop, the participants went through three comprehensive learning modules: evolution of the plumbing industry, new plumbing technology, and problem identification and troubleshooting that also include hands-on training.

Participants of the workshop were

representatives from Cobankat Hardware Inc., SM Ace Hardware & Workshop, Coby's Marketing Corp., Summit Pacific Philippines, Asian Home Design Center Inc., Interpipe Plumbing and Services Contractor, Sincere Plumbing Works Inc., Nampap Inc., Lines & Colours.

REAL ESTATE

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

2000 HIGHLIGHTS

A year of IT parks, Erap mansions, housing feuds

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR

ANALYSTS state the Philippine real estate recovery was poised to take off in 2000, but was aborted by the Mindanao conflict (and the rash of bombings that went with it). The real estate industry, nonetheless, dished out its own drama, diversion and media frenzy to the Filipino public.

A word war ensued between the Chamber of Real Estate Builders Association (Creba) and the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council. Creba—an umbrella organization of over 4,000 developers, brokers, contractors, manufacturers and suppliers in low-cost housing. Creba came out with published full-page advertisements and news releases lambasting HUDCC chair Lenny de Jesus. Creba challenged De Jesus to validate her claim that mass housing units had been completed and delivered to beneficiaries equivalent to 60 percent of President Estrada's commitment of 350,000 units in year 2000. Creba asked De Jesus the actual number of houses that had been completed under the multilending window system (MLWS), a project that HUDCC pursued but which Creba despised. Creba was pushing for a centralized lending scheme of financing mass housing.

De Jesus countered that Creba,

which, she said, is among the groups being investigated for causing huge losses in government revenues, has been lobbying for developers to be given control of funds meant for socialized housing by the Centralized Home Financing Program. She said that Creba's proposal to be allowed to manage housing funds is "illegal" and "unconstitutional." On Aug. 17, a news came out about De Jesus planning to take legal action against Creba's paid advertisements against her.

IT parks

During mid-2000, a global trend opened new opportunities for the Philippine real estate sector. Information technology paved the way for the establishment of "wired" buildings and IT parks.

At the forefront of this revolutionary trend were new buildings in prime locations such as The Enterprise Center in Makati City, where IT companies such as Microsoft Philippines and 3Com Philippines have grouped together and have been called a virtual IT zone. A "plug and play" environment has enabled people to "get connected" anywhere in the wired building.

Various real estate developers, on the other hand, raced for the establishment of their own IT parks in the country. Megaworld Group's Eastwood City scored first with its



Cyber Park. Several IT locators on the Cyber Park—Asia Online, IBM Philippines, Citibank, America's Barnes & Noble subsidiary Electric Publishing Ventures Inc. and Trend Micro Inc.—swiftly moved in. IT parks have shown the real estate and IT industry where property development is likely to head in the coming years. The Eastwood City Cyber Park has even integrated its own graduate school and free trade zone.

It was upon the initiative of taipan Andrew Tan of Megaworld Corp. that Megaworld's IT park was

established. In 1995, he purchased a 15-hectare former textile factory in Libis, Quezon City. Afterward, the country's first IT park was launched, and applied with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority.

Next came real estate giant Filinvest's Northgate Cyber Zone. The 244-hectare Filinvest Corporate City has allocated 18 hectares for its IT park. Owned by Andrew Gotianun, the Northgate Cyber Zone is strategically located at the gateway to the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and

Quezon) growth corridor. The NCZ, said Filinvest, would showcase high-tech buildings with high-speed convergent backbone, and one-stop plug and play communications utility capable of carrying voice, video and data. A high-speed convergent backbone would mean locators (companies transferring to the IT park) could avail of services such as high-speed Internet, web hosting, streaming media and Virtual Private Networking.

Then came the First Pacific Group, led by Manny Pangilinan.

Its plan included the establishment of a 25-hectare "E-Square" boasting of P40-billion worth of infrastructure investments. Other up and coming IT parks include Zobel-Ayala's alternative IT zone in downtown Cebu, a 50-hectare Cebu Business Park. Robinsons Land Corp has also announced its plans to develop its own IT park.

Erap mansions

Long before the impeachment trial of the century, real estate properties—suspected of being President Estrada's mansions for his mistresses—found its way under the keen eye of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism. Stories and pictures of some of these mansions found print in the INQUIRER. The list is incredibly long; some of these properties are Harvard Street, Wack Wack (P46.5 million), Stanford Street (P93 million), Wack Wack Road (P123.3 million), Harvard Street (P192.5 million), the "Boracay" mansion (P700 million) and three other mansions in Forbes Park priced from P100 million to over P800 million.

Whether these prove to be President Estrada's properties or not, these mansions, and the cost of building them, give a glimpse of the greatest exposé yet untold in Philippine real estate: that of the great divide between the unimaginably rich and the impoverished.

Housing a way to economic recovery

HOUSING is not only a critical socio-political program of government, it is also needed to jumpstart the country's economic recovery, according to presidential housing adviser Lenny V. de Jesus.

De Jesus made the statement as he appealed to private sector developers to continue their initiatives at housing constructions, despite the poor showing of the peso against the dollar.

The head of various shelter agencies under the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council said housing has many significant multiplier effects. For every peso spent on housing, there is a corresponding P16 increase in the country's gross domestic product, she said.

When President Estrada made housing the centerpiece program of his administration, De Jesus added, he directed the HUDCC to install all the needed reforms to make the program successful.

De Jesus recalled that the first problem tackled by the Estrada administration was the matter of housing finance. To solve



DE JESUS

the problems inherited from previous administrations, such as the bankruptcy of the unified home lending program, P76-billion worth of funds was initially generated from both government and private sector.

One innovative policy reform is the sharing of risks between the sources of housing funds and private developers

by instituting the contact-to-sell scheme with a buy-back provision over a two-year seasoning period.

Meanwhile, De Jesus reported that HUDCC's "aggressive" marketing campaign has paid off through the institutionalized approach, such as signing memoranda of agreement with several government departments of offices.

As in the community mortgage program, the HUDCC chief said it has been their stand that the government or developer did not only have to build houses but must also provide for other social, cultural and economic interventions needed to establish viable communities.

Despite the present economic slump, De Jesus continued, there is still no move to change the interest rates imposed on socialized housing which had been pegged at 9 percent a year.

But she said this is being done in a manner that will not affect the market system, especially at a time when the country is still seeking the way out of the crisis into economic recovery.

Foundation cites educational, environmental preservation efforts

MEGAWORLD Foundation, the nonprofit social arm of property-based holding firm Megaworld Corp., actively pursued major undertakings in education and environmental protection last year.

The foundation started the formal implementation of its college scholarship program during the first half of the year. It is now sponsoring the education of a number of aspiring engineers, architects and IT professionals in some of Metro Manila's top educational institutions—University of the Philippines, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Mapua Institute of Technology, University of Santo Tomas, Far Eastern University, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila and the University of the East.

Full scholarship privileges are provided to the students. The foundation shoulders the tuition and miscellaneous expenses and provides book allowances and monthly stipends. The scholarship grant is renewable every semester depending on the continuing financial need and performance of the scholar.

Parallel to Megaworld Corp.'s heightened focus on information technology as both an investment area and a tool for workplace competitiveness, the foundation is also adding emphasis on IT education with a plan to send qualified individuals from among its present crop of scholars to the CyberstateU.Com for short-term IT certification courses. CyberstateU.Com is a pioneering IT learning institute based at the

Eastwood City CyberPark, the country's first IT park being developed by Megaworld.

In environmental conservation, the foundation laid the basis for a more affirmative action in protecting Philippine ecosystems through a landmark partnership with international environment group World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Philippines.

Megaworld Foundation was named as WWF's first corporate conservation ally in the country in view of its financial support for the group's ecosystem conservation projects around the Philippines.

WWF-Philippines is undertaking conservation work in places like the Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park in the Sulu Sea, Mt. Guiting-Guiting Natural Park in Sibuyan Island, the Pamalacan Island Whale and Dolphin Watching Village, Anilao in Batangas, Conservation Science and Research and Extension facility in Subic Bay and Dugong and Whale Shark Research and Conservation.

Megaworld Foundation chair Cirilo Manlangit said the foundation plans to actively follow through on its commitments next year despite the challenging economic environment. "The role of organizations like the Megaworld Foundation gains greater significance during trying times because issues like education and environmental preservation tend to take a backseat to more pressing economic concerns," he said.



COMUNIDADES and Philreality officials are shown during the launch of the project. From left are Philreality president Walter W. Brown, Comunidades chair Dr. Juan Peña, Philreality chair Gerardo Lanuza Jr. and Comunidades president Enrique Moras Jr.

Parque Bonifacio rounds up investors

NINETY-THREE investors have already made reservations for their Parque Bonifacio units with Comunidades Developers Inc., the firm that successfully pioneered the "At Cost" concept in property development in the Philippines with its first condominium at the plush Filinvest Corporate City.

And now the success story continues with Parque Bonifacio. Comunidades has launched this new and bigger residential condominium development which will rise in Metro Manila's most prestigious enclave—

Fort Bonifacio Global City.

Parque Bonifacio offers a quality lifestyle that is now within the reach of not only an exclusive few but of a select many. Available are a mix of studio, 1-bedroom and 2-bedroom units and a combinations of these to make possible 3-bedroom units at an attractively affordable cost price of only P60,000 per sq. m.

Comunidades entered into an option agreement with Philippine Realty and Holdings Corporation, landowners of the Parque Bonifacio development.

Crown Asia holds sales congress

CROWN Asia recently feted its business partners who were the top earners for the third quarter during a recent congress held at the Fontana Resort in Pampanga.

Present during the event, one of the most awaited by the brokers and contractors for the year, were top officials of Crown Asia led by chief operating officer Edgardo Santos.

The congress was part of the prizes for the top business partners who were treated to an overnight stay at the prime resort in Clark Field and were also given spending money.

Aside from their prize, the top brokers were also given the privilege of being part of a planning session that will map out Crown Asia's projects and plans for the coming year.

"We took this time to get our top brokers and contractors' inputs and their thoughts for the coming year about our plans and the real estate sector in general," Santos said.

"Overall, I would be proud to say that it was a very fruitful conference and we were able to hammer out a plan that is dynamic and essential and caters to the needs of all concerned," he added.

Crown Asia's master-planned subdivisions are Cottonwood Heights, Maia Alta and The Orchard in Antipolo City, Nova Romania, Residenza and Villa Alegria in Novaliches, and La Brea in Fairview, Quezon City. For more information, visit Crown Asia's website at <http://www.crownasia.com.ph>.



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LIFESTYLE

CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor

Which is the only formula scientifically proven to make your baby smarter?
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NUTRITION

Be more physically and mentally dynamic with core training

BY MARGE C. ENRIQUEZ
PHOTOS BY JOHNNY VILLENA

GOODBYE Arnold Schwarzenegger. Hello, Jet Li.

Exercises in the new millennium aim to make muscles perform better without the soreness and bulking associated with traditional workouts. Exercise methods in the past aimed at the hard-body. They emphasized superficial muscles but the bulk restrained the muscles' capability to move freely. Modern techniques focus on the functional body. The exercises are designed to improve posture, flexibility, coordination and well-being.

One of the new developments is core training. Using foam rollers, this system enables you to strengthen and lengthen your body without tearing tissues, jarring force on your joints or fatigue.

Trends

Like the consumer world wherein new products are frequently launched to keep the market excited, the fitness industry has been tripping over itself to create new trends.

Ask Vivian Zapanta, a proponent of fitness in the Philippines who's now the resort manager of Westin Philippine Plaza. She's been through the era of the cut-and-dried slimmastics of the '70s; Jane Fonda workouts, Jackie Sorensen's jazzercise, Richard Simmons' exercise videos, weight training, aerobics of all kinds—high and low-impact, step, bench, slide, aqua and roller-blades. After decades of doing workouts in mindless repetitions, the fitness industry is moving toward mind-body focus movements. Exercise buffs are starting to be aware of how unproductive the exercises of the '70s and '80s were.

Zapanta explains that the ballistic movements in calisthenics can result in injury. The risks are greater when the instructor doesn't correct the clients in using the right muscles and movement dynamics. She also points out the arduous techniques that leave you huffing and puffing in high-impact aerobics is a misnomer.

"Impact refers to how much the body exerts jarring movements," she explains. The no-pain-no-gain mindset has led people to spend too much time at the gym with little results. People are realizing that although exercise should be a part of their lives, it should enhance not detract from their leading a full life.

Big body, weak links

There's another reason people are getting weary of the old exercise regimen. These workouts are based on isolating muscles and developing each area of the body individually instead of considering the body as an integrated whole. Many people are not fit or strong because of the imbalance of engaging in inefficient exercises that isolate certain body parts while ignoring others.

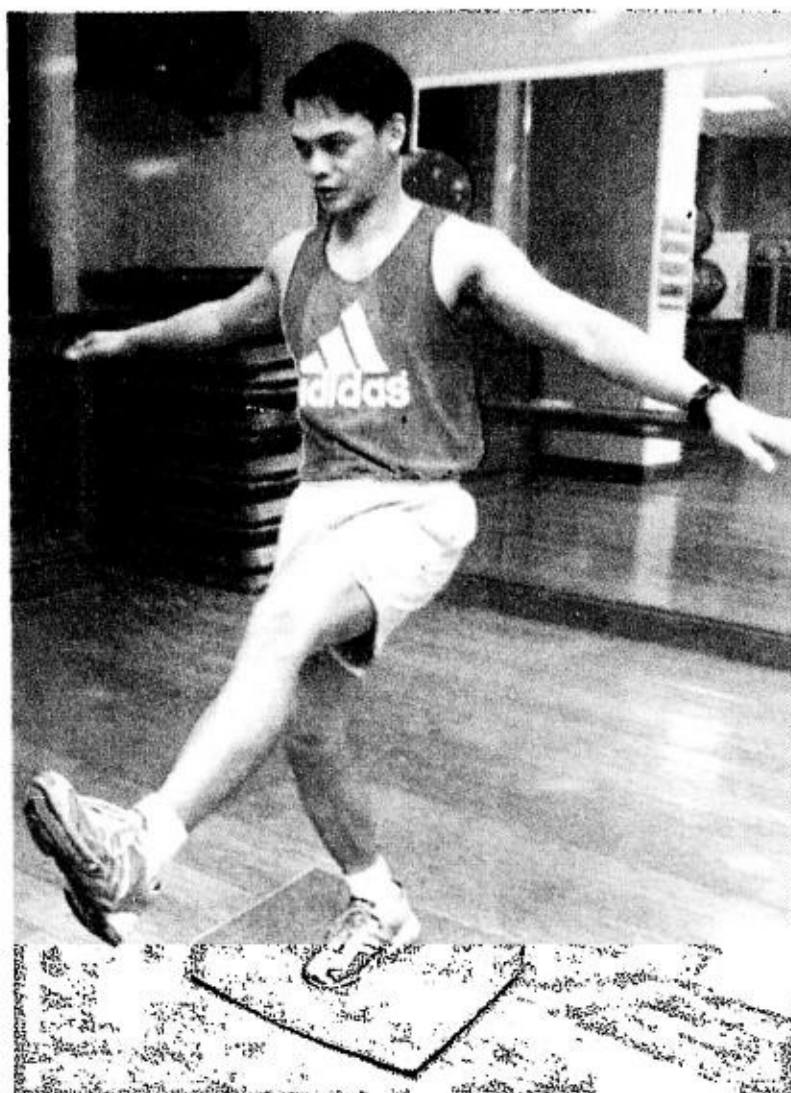
The disadvantage is that some parts of the body are bulkier than the rest, sometimes leading to muscular imbalance.

"You get a big body with small legs and weak links," says Zapanta.

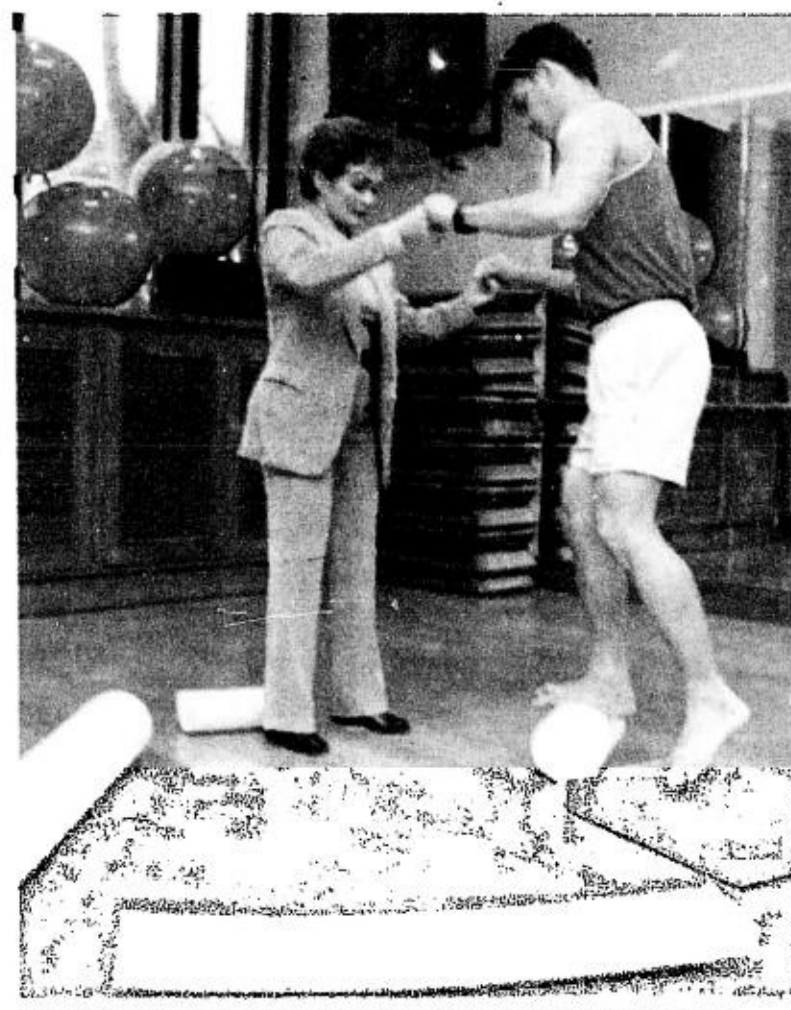
Therefore, personal training today incorporates the principles of physical therapy, health care and Pilates. Core training aims to reeducate people to work their bodies with the effectiveness of doing daily jobs in mind. This program would encourage people to be more physically and mentally dynamic.

Zapanta learned about core training when she went to the United States to attend a personal training summit organized by the International Dance Educators Association. The exercises helped relieve people of soreness and tightness

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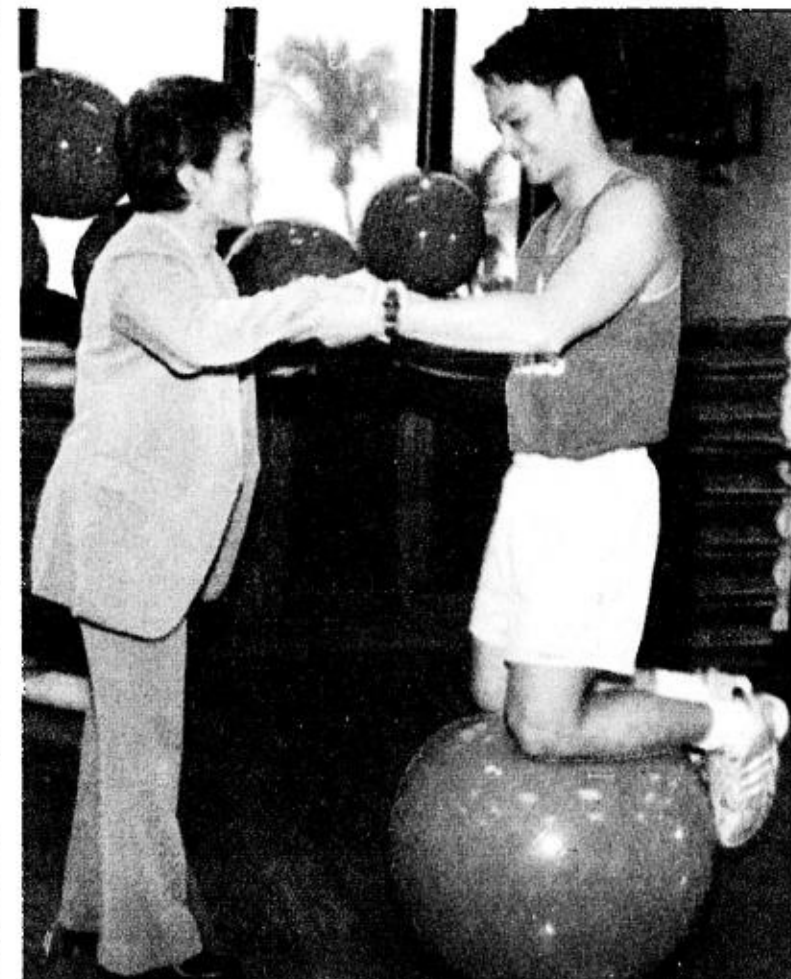
TESTING balance reaction. Westin Health Club instructor Joseph Honorio stands on the foam pad and tries out if he can stand on one leg.



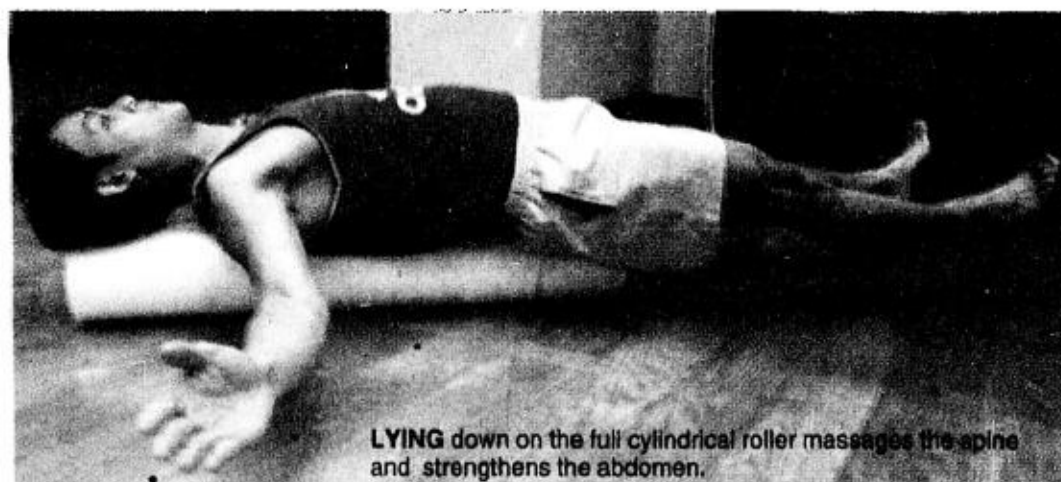
DOING the obstacle course training with Vivian Zapanta. The foam rollers come in different sizes and densities. Each roller is placed a stride length's apart from each other. The goal is to walk on top of each roller in clockwise and counterclockwise directions.



HONORIO does the tendon stretch on the half-cylindrical roller.



EXERCISE to improve partnering in ballroom dancing. Honorio learns to find his inner center by balancing on the Resist-A-Ball.



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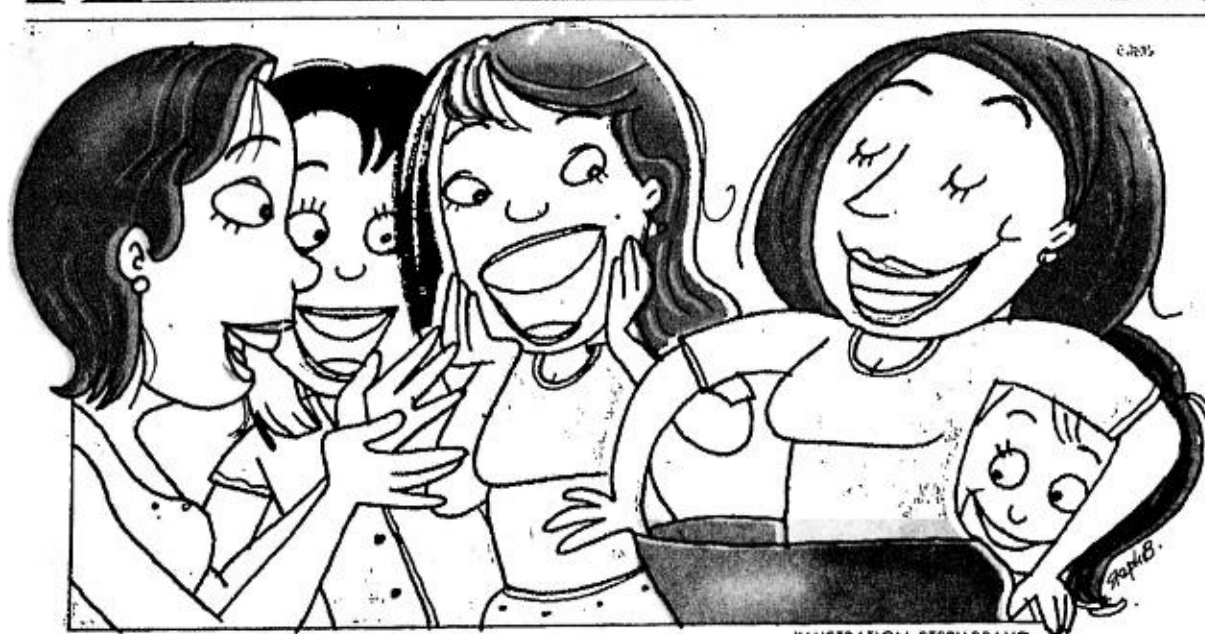


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Lose weight by making lifestyle changes you can live with

Part I

IN FEBRUARY 1999, our high school gang reunited during the 25th high school reunion at Philippine Women's College in Davao City. Since then, those of us who live in Manila have been meeting regularly every three months. My *barkada* have all been waiting for this week's column because it is about our good friend Alma (not her real name) and how our quarterly get-togethers have inspired her to lose weight and regain her self-confidence. Alma didn't want her identity revealed until Christmas this year when I will report on her progress in achieving her fitness and weight loss goals. Needless to say, her friends are all cheering her on and are every bit as excited as she is for her pending success.

Her story could be an inspiration to many readers who are making their New Year's resolutions right now. This is a tale of how to lose weight the right way—by making realistic lifestyle changes that one can live with so that the weight loss will be permanent.

How she gained weight

Alma said she was 110 pounds when she was in high school (she is 5'2½" tall) and around 120 pounds when she got married at 25. Her weight remained stable for the next few years. Since she had no children yet, she would do overtime work almost every day. The earliest she would come home was 6 p.m. She ate regular meals three times a day with very small snacks in between, if any. So even though she had no exercise, she was able to maintain her weight (she would have eventually gained weight with this regimen because when you don't exercise, your muscles get smaller as you get older and this lowers the metabolism).

Her weight gain started when she resigned from her job at the age of 31. Because she had nothing to do, she would eat to combat the boredom of being a housewife with no

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Aboitiz Juan



kids and hardly any responsibilities. She didn't weigh herself so she was in denial that she was putting on weight. When she finally did weigh herself at the age of 36, she was surprised to discover that she was already 140 pounds. However, this unpleasant discovery didn't discourage her from overeating. By the time she was 38, she was 170 pounds. Her wardrobe gradually changed from smart office wear to shorts with a garter waistline and a loose T-shirt. She had to wear the pants and shirts of her husband. After a while, even the clothes of her husband didn't fit her anymore. She had to buy the large sizes in the maternity section. Empire-style maternity pants were the only kind she could fit in.

She was eating 6-8 times a day. She could finish one whole crispy *pata* and a big platter of rice all by herself. It was normal for her to finish one bar of Cadbury chocolate or one package of Ferrero chocolate in one sitting. She was drinking 3 liters of Coke a day. She only drank water at breakfast.

She had almost zero physical activity. She would lie down and watch TV the whole morning after eating breakfast. She would only get up from bed to eat what she called her "breakfast part two" and "lunch part one" before eating her "real" lunch when her son would return home from school. She would take a daily two-hour siesta then she would spend the afternoon eating away to her heart's content. She would sleep late at night so dinner also had a part one and two (a literal midnight snack of sandwiches, chocolates, etc.).

She knew her eating was out of control and she was feeling insecure about her weight but she felt she couldn't stop herself. At eat-all-you-can restaurants, she would not stop eating until she felt like throwing up. She looked forward to going to parties only if she was comfortable with the people there because then she could eat excessively. She never went to parties where she didn't really know the people. She particularly avoided the office parties of her husband. She didn't want to meet his friends because she was scared of what they would be thinking about her weight. She became so paranoid about her weight that she didn't want to be seen in public with her husband.

Her husband didn't say anything to her about her weight gain because he was also gaining weight (though not as much as she was) and he did not want to hurt her feelings though he did tell her to be careful otherwise she could become obese. Her relatives were not as tactful though. They would always tell her that she was fat. One relative even said that she might as well put sugar on her face because she looked like an *ensaimada*. However, Alma says that all this nagging, no matter how well meant it was, did not help her. Their hurtful words only made her *pikon* and irritated. In fact, she said it made her want to rebel and eat even more.

She was disgusted with her appearance. She was frustrated that she could not buy clothes in the women's section but had to go to the men's or maternity section to search for something that would fit her. She said that even having her hair fixed or putting on makeup did not make her feel attractive anymore. She felt old because she was forced to wear "old" or matronly clothes.

Next week: How she lost weight

Visit my website at www.tinajuanfitness.com for past articles or exercises

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

V-sit with ball rotation

Strengthens the muscles of the trunk—abdominals and lower back.

Equipment:

Exercise mat and medicine ball (this is a weighted leather/rubber ball used for exercise). Alternatives are a volleyball, basketball, or soccer ball.

Exercise technique:

1. Sit with knees bent and

together holding the ball with both hands.

2. Lean backward only as far as you can maintain a straight back. The control will come from the tightening of your trunk muscles.

3. Holding the position, rotate the ball from side to side.

4. Do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips:

1. This is an advanced exercise. If you have weak abdominal muscles, this is not an appropriate exer-

cise to start with.

2. If you have relatively strong trunk muscles but have never done this type of exercise, get in shape by leaning backward without a ball and without rotation. Hold for 4-8 seconds. Repeat a few times.

3. If doing the rotation, do so at a slow controlled speed. Twist your trunk and not just your arms.

Repetitions:

One repetition equals the right and left side. Do 12-15 repetitions.



PHOTO BY ROGER MARGALLO

Immunization to cover all age brackets

FOR THE FIRST time ever, the Philippines will have its own immunization calendar for children, adolescents, adults, the elderly and other risk groups such as physicians and health-care workers.

This was disclosed by Dr. Lulu Bravo, president of the Philippine Foundation for Vaccination, which held the first Philippine Immunization Conference at the Manila Midtown Hotel recently.

"We can now plan, determine and schedule activities to improve immunization coverage in all age brackets," said Bravo, immediate past president of the Pediatric Infectious Disease Society of the Phils.

The government has been using the Expanded Program of Immunization of the World Health Organization since the '60s. This proved to be a successful campaign as death and disability from vaccine-preventable diseases has dwindled significantly. Vaccine-preventable diseases include hepatitis, measles, mumps and rubella as well as typhoid and rabies.

Good coverage

With EPI, the Department of Health reported good immunization coverage, eradicating smallpox and poliomyelitis in the process. Recently, WHO declared the country polio-free.

"We have improved the percentage of fully immunized children to as close

as 80-90 percent, and thus have improved our infant mortality rate to 40/1,000 compared to double this value in the '60s," said Dr. Bravo.

However, Dr. Bravo admits the Philippines still has a long way to go, because compared to Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore, the country's infant mortality rate is still 10 times more.

Poverty, lack of education and inadequate health-care programs are among the problems confronting both the private and government sectors in their efforts to improve the national immunization program. In fact, 35 out of 1,000 Filipino infants die annually due to diseases that could have been prevented by vaccines, according to the National Statistics Office and the United Nations Children Fund.

Sen. Juan Flavio, the keynote speaker at the conference, said the private and government sectors need to act together to solve these problems, and he is willing to propose the legislation of a wider national immunization program.

The immunization schedule for Filipinos was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee on Immunization, PIDSP and PFV.

Under the immunization schedule, people can be given a primary dose, a booster dose and a catch-up immunization program for diphtheria-tetanus toxoid, hepatitis B, varicella, MMR

(mumps, measles, rubella) pneumococcal infections and influenza as well as typhoid and rabies.

Depending on the vaccine-preventable diseases, doses can be given at birth as well as weeks and months apart, with booster doses every three to five years.

Mission

PFV was launched last year to protect and advocate for the promotion of vaccination as essential to disease prevention.

In its mission statement, the foundation says it aims to reduce human morbidity and mortality through objective, ethical and scientifically accurate communication of the benefits of disease prevention through vaccination.

The prime movers of the foundation are Dr. Bravo of the Pediatric Infectious Disease Society of the Phils.; Dr. Eric Tayag of the National Center for Infectious and Degenerative Diseases-Department of Health; Dr. Alicia Tamesis of the Society of the Adolescent Medicine of the Phils. and Lani Mercado-Revilla, celebrity mother.

The foundation envisions a future where disease prevention will also become a medical and social imperative, and the fruits of the entire world's knowledge and research are made available to them.

Be more physically and mentally dynamic with core training



STRENGTHENING the ankles on the board

(From page C1)

due to stress and shaped them up for other sports such as tennis, golf or swimming. She was impressed with the way patients with Alzheimer's disease, accident victims, injured patients and senior citizens responded to core training.

Lying on rollers

Core training dispels two myths: (1) that strength is gained by exercising with weights; (2) as you get older you should stick only to cardiovascular activities like biking or running on the treadmill.

Zapanta says that bone density and lean body mass decrease as one ages. To combat these aging signs, strength training is recommended. She says the stereotype of the grouchy old person is attributed to the fact that one has no outlet. Exercise helps relieve the pent-up tension.

"You're more relaxed and free from disease," she says.

Core training develops the areas between the pelvis and the rib cage, from the front to the back. Strength is developed when you control your center by lengthening and tightening while simultaneously working on your extremities. Since the movements are organic, you get a grasp of how to use the body in the way the exercise system is trying to get it to move.

The core training program at the Westin Health Club is individualized. The client undergoes a comprehensive interview and exam. The program is designed to work your body within the bounds of your muscular stamina. Since all the movements are synchronized, there's no need to load up on one muscle region unlike in conventional workouts.

You test your strength by standing, kneeling, sitting or lying down on foam rollers in cylindrical shapes in various lengths, circumferences and densities. The rollers are made to develop balance reactions, increase body awareness, re-educate muscles, improve reflexes and flexibility. By letting the movements elongate your body as you balance on the rollers, you are making a habit of comfortable exertion for the body to go along.



FOR RELAXATION. Improve your golf swings at Westin's aqua golf range.

And, when members and guests of Westin Philippine Plaza want to get out of the confines of the gym, they can unwind at Westin's aqua range. The target is how far they can drive the ball toward Manila Bay. They test their putting skills by the sea wall, using golf balls that float. There are "caddies" on the boats who pick up the balls.

"You can improve your golf swings," she says. More important, this activity is very relaxing.

Call the Westin Health Club at 551-5555 or Vivian Zapanta at 832-6984

E-mail the author at menriquez@inquirer.com.ph



WE'RE TAKING UR KIND OF FUN 2D GENTXT LEVEL

January Gig Guide

"The Sixth Day", Advanced Screening

A sci-fi film on cloning the human race starring **Arnold Schwarzenegger**. Be one of the first lucky 40 GENTXTers to go to the GENTXT Booth at Glorietta (near Burger King) and Greenbelt starting December 27.
>> Greenhills Theater - 7:30 PM



02

GENTXT Crossover Live Party

Groove the night away in this spirited party. Be one of the first 15 GENTXTers to go to Harrison Communications* to get a pair of tickets starting January 13.
>> Chef & Brewer, Ortigas - 9:00 PM



18

"What Women Want", Advanced Screening

A comedy-romance starring **Mel Gibson, Helen Hunt** and **Marisa Tomei**. Be one of the first 30 GENTXTers to go to Harrison Communications* to get a pair of tickets.
 Details to be announced, watch out for flyers and announcements



"Little Nicky", Advanced Screening

A fantasy-comedy starring **Adam Sandler** and **Patricia Arquette**. Be one of the first 20 GENTXTers to go to Harrison Communications* to get a pair of tickets.
 Details to be announced, watch out for flyers and announcements



New Partners

This year opens with more establishments for GENTXTers to enjoy!

Rustan's Department Store

GENTXTers get 10% off on all regular cash purchases of Young Adult brands at Rustan's Department Store. Young VIP and Major (available in all branches: Makati, Shangri-la Plaza, Cubao, Marikina, Alabang and Cebu). Dollhouse, Paris Blues, Free People, Kiggin' Bulldog, Z. Cavaniro, Symplo, Mudd jeans and Tops, Ultimate Swimwear, Tanga, Rose, Day, Rebel Beach, Point Zero, BC, Ethics, Wooden Dog, Kixwear, On the Brink, La Rue Bags, Studio 18, Lei Bags and Shoes, Steve Madden Shoes and Accessories, Raport Shoes, Mr. Top Shoes, Rocket Dog, Idea Nuova, Habitat and Blue Q (available only in specific branches: Makati, Shangri-la Plaza and Alabang).



Discovery Spa

GENTXTers get free manicure/pedicure for every full body massage at Discovery Spa, Ortigas Center, on cash and credit card payments. Not valid for any other offer.



Art Avenue

GENTXTers get 15% off on cash purchases and 5% off on credit at Art Avenue, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center.



Planet Mars

Every GENTXTer and one guest get free entrance every evening until twelve midnight at Planet Mars, A.S. Arnaz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road). Not valid during special events or shows.



Pro Golf

GENTXTers get 10% off on specific golf equipment (Excalibur, Kunnan, Mitsubishi, Uniqe, Horizon and Prestwick), free swing analysis and custom club fitting. Golf lessons available with prior appointment at Pro Golf, Park Square, Alabang Town Center and Shangri-la Mall.



ck Calvin Klein and Nautica

GENTXTers get 25% off on ck Calvin Klein or Nautica eyewear. Avail of this sensational treat in any of these optical shops: Almada, Casaje, Executive, George, Good Vision, Lenswork, Magna, Optical Works, Perez, Sabaten-Pascual, Sarabia, Success Vision, The Optical Shop, V. Casaje, Vinas and Vision Express.



ACA Video Offer 2 + 2

GENTXTers flash their GENTXT cards and bring home two more VHS tapes for every two tapes they rent at ACA Video. Waived membership fees for GENTXTers.



*HARRISON COMMUNICATIONS is at the 4F First Life Center Bldg., 174 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Look for GENTXTer Cecille, flash your GENTXT card, and get your free tickets.



Your GENTXT card is your passport to free invites, exclusive events and privileges and bigger discounts.

It's so easy to get a GENTXTcard. All active Globe Handyphone Plan and Prepaid Plus subscribers between 18 and 29 years old are eligible to get the card. Simply bring along the following:

- Valid ID with photo, signature and indication of birthday like a driver's license and SSS ID
- If ID has no indication of birthday, please bring an ID with your picture and the document bearing your birthdate (e.g. community tax certificate, SSS Card, birth, marriage or baptismal certificate).
- Membership fee of P200 to be paid upon approval of application.

For Plan Subscribers:

One of the last two months paid/settled Globe Handyphone bill.

For Prepaid Plus Subscribers:

P1,500 worth of used Globe Handyphone Prepaid Plus call cards.

You can get and submit your application forms at all Globe Telecom Business Centers and at selected GENTXT events.

You can also get the latest GENTXT gig guide from InfoText by keying-in GENTXT and sending it to 2333.

Check out the latest GENTXT events through your Globe Handyphone. Just key in GENTXT, then send to 2333.

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Spa treatments and free shopping offers

FOR TWO months starting this January, Feminine Indulgences with Palmolive Naturals Shower Cream lets women enjoy the luxurious pampering they truly deserve. Every Palmolive Naturals Shower Cream purchase not only gives them soft and beautiful skin, but also the chance to relax through spa treatments at Slimmers World International, and avail of special shopping discounts at Sari-Sari Store. Throughout the promo period, a Palmolive Naturals Shower Cream shower kit box will serve as your key to a facial treatment at Slimmers World. Consumers just have to call in their appointments and come on time, along with their shower kit boxes to avail of a free 15-minute facial treatment. Or better yet, wallow in an enervating Milk Bath, where spa attendants bathe, scrub and pamper customers in a Jacuzzi. This delightful experience is capped off with Palmolive Naturals Shower Cream, the Milk

for the Skin. The first few customers who avail of the Milk Bath will each get a luxurious robe from Palmolive Naturals Shower Cream.

REVITALIZER. A simple and convenient beauty regimen worth considering is Imdeen. Imdeen is a skincare tablet that contains natural marine extract proteins and polysaccharides similar to those

found naturally in the skin. This key ingredient in Imdeen may help address skin dryness and emerging fine lines and wrinkles due to sun exposure, pollution and stress. By supplying this ingredient along with acerola powder and zinc, Imdeen revitalizes the skin from within, helping it become more supple and younger-looking. Manufactured by Ferrosan, Imdeen is also a handy beauty regimen ideal for busy career women whose hectic schedule simply wouldn't allow for them to undergo lengthy facial care sessions. Available at Mercury Drug and Paucity Drug Stores in Metro Manila. Call 781-1111.

WEEKLY DOSAGE



FOR HEALTHIER AND CLEANER TEETH

WOW tooth oil and breath freshener is a product of Essentially Yours Industries of Canada and is the first all-natural breath freshener made from pure essential oils of peppermint, spearmint, anise, olive and cinnamon with a base of sweet almond and grapeseed oils. WOW breath freshener is guaranteed to provide the best resolution to counter the ill effects of bad breath while being gentle on the throat and mouth. Also, it gives you a healthier and cleaner set of teeth. Call 633-2594



NEW IN THE MARKET. The Hiyas Papaya Herbal Whitening Soap with Papaya Leaves from Splash Manufacturing Corp. contains Herbalite, a scientifically researched whitening component that effectively whitens skin. Combined with bits of real papaya leaves that act as all-natural scrub, the soap gently removes old skin cells, maintains natural moisture levels of the skin and keeps the skin smelling fresh all day.



HEALTHWAY makes accessible its quality yet affordable medical services such as annual physical checkups and pre-employment medical examinations through its mobile van clinics. Photo shows Healthway Medical Clinics' team of seasoned occupational health and safety practitioners and consultants committed to provide their professional yet personal attention. Healthway's mobile clinics consist of a small van and a tourist bus that cover the northernmost and southernmost regions of Luzon. Call 893-7910/7920/7940 local 107.

NEW WEIGHT CENTERS. Weight Management Center has opened new clinics at Healthway Medical Center, SM City and Healthway Medical Center, Alabang Town Center. The new clinics in the malls aim to serve its growing clientele. Medically supervised weight loss and weight gain programs are now offered in Healthway Medical Center, Basement Level, SM City Annex, and at 2/F Healthway Medical Center, Alabang Town Center. The center is staffed by qualified personnel headed by Dr. Joel C. Mendez. Call 371-8886 or e-mail weighles@i-manila.com.ph.

SPORTS APPAREL. Shoes and apparel worn by superstars Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods and Lindsay Davenport are now available by shopping at the Nike Factory Outlet in Mamplasan, Biñan, Laguna.

Owned and managed by Planet Sports Inc., the top sports retailer behind such names as Nike Stadium and Athlete's Foot, the Nike Factory Outlet is a spacious 600-m store that gives shoppers the opportunity



BABY-FRIENDLY YET AFFORDABLE

to experience the Nike lifestyle while giving them the best value for your money.

Get hold of all-imported footwear styles and designs now available for up to 40 percent less. Whatever your preferred sport—soccer, basketball, tennis, or cross-training—there's an athletic footwear available for you at the Nike Factory Outlet. The store also offers high-quality, off-season Nike sports apparel and accessories available in various styles, sizes and designs.

The Rogemson Company, maker of reputable and reliable skin care products, is introducing new baby-friendly and affordable products, Bambini Baby Lotion and Baby Cologne. It contains no harmful ingredients or harsh perfumes that can irritate skin. Moms can choose from these variants: Innocence, Giggles, Blush and Sixteen. Bambini Baby Lotion is available in 50 ml, 125 ml and 200 ml sizes.

TRIBUTE TO A FATHER

You have written and shared with us your book of knowledge. This season, we turn to it once again, feeling the touch of a vanished hand, hearing a voice that time will not still.

Honor is your most valuable legacy. With honor, your word is acted on.

In the commerce of man your word is sought. Belief in you is absolute. Your word is your bond.

GO KIM PAH
1899-1983



Wisdom is more important than silver, more precious than pure gold, pearl and treasures. Anything you like cannot compare with wisdom.

"Wealth and power do not last forever. If the name is destroyed and virtue gone, of what use is money?"

(January 1983)

Work ethic is just another term for excellence and professionalism. The realization of one's dream comes from honest labor.

"Corporate success achieved without a thousand days of sweat and blood may flourish for a while but will not last long and its fruits will not be enjoyed."

(December 17, 1969)

"Do not spend money you haven't earned. Do not buy things you don't need no matter how cheap. Don't lose your self-respect because of poverty."

(July 25, 1978)

Filipino kids win something more important in Sydney

BY LINDA B. BOLIDO

SYDNEY changed the lives not just of the athletes who participated in the Olympics 2000.

For Gary, Jenny and Tricia (not their real names), the almost dreamlike visit to the Australian city re-established their worth as human beings and sparked a flicker of hope that things could still be better for them.

The youngsters were among some 40 young people, mainly from Australia, who participated in World Forum 2000 in August under the sponsorship of the Children and Youth Foundation of the Phils. (CYFP). Consisting of two parts—the Management and Leadership Institute and Children First Conference—the annual event was under the auspices of the International Forum for Children's Welfare.

For the three Filipino youths, the trip to Sydney offered more than just the excitement of being out of the country for the first time. The experience opened their eyes to the fact that, tragic as their life stories were, they were not isolated cases and that even in rich countries like Australia and the United States, children were not always valued as they should be.

Not yet 20, the kids had been through so much more than many people twice or thrice their age. The scars their fragile bodies bear attest to the few times they have, in fact, tried to end their young lives.

Scarred for life

Jenny, 15, is figuratively and literally scarred for life. Her wrists show the marks of self-inflicted cuts—either because of suicide attempts or to affirm her bond with her gang, which she calls her fraternity. Her mother's live-in partner had abused her and to cope with the trauma, she got drawn to the gang, which she thought would help her regain her self-esteem and self-respect and restore her confidence in herself.

The sympathy and support had to be earned, however, through hazing, a euphemism for torture. Jenny said she was beaten and burned with cigarettes.

The trip made them realize that, tragic as their life stories were, they were not isolated cases and that even in rich countries like Australia and the United States, children were not always valued as they should be.

Her biological father's relatives decided to put her in the institution where she is now. Although treated with care and understanding, life remains difficult. She pointed out that people still label her as an abused child because Preda (short for People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance Foundation for Human Resources, Family and Community Development and Research) is known as a shelter for abused girls.

Seventeen-year-old Tricia's ordeal started with beatings from both her mother and the latter's live-in partner. She recalled being stripped of her clothes by her mother outside their house, and her hands chained. With nowhere to go, she endured the beatings and stayed.

But even worse was to follow as her stepfather started to abuse her sexually. Her mother refused to believe her until a neighbor said that Tricia's own younger brother had witnessed one incident of sexual abuse.

The stepfather is now serving his 37-year jail term and Tricia is



JENNY (left) and Gary recount their dreamlike visit to Sydney. Although they had to tell their ordeal to strangers, the experience helped to rekindle their hopes.



trying to rebuild her shattered young life with the help of CRIBS (Create Responsive Infants by Sharing), an organization providing shelter and rehabilitative services to abandoned babies and sexually abused youngsters. Despite what happened, Tricia is now back with her mother. "Whatever happens, she is my mother. I owe her my life," she says without rancor.

The younger of two children, Gary suffered not at the hands of strangers but his own parents. His mother, he recalled, kept telling him she wished she had killed him when he was younger. He was considered bad luck and his mother blamed him for the misfortunes that befell the family—the father's being fired from his job and the family's losing their property. Gary said his parents were even telling their relatives that he was not their biological child. When people visited, "my mother would lock me in a dark room in our house," he recalled. "My father also denied I was his son to our friends."

When his parents died, Gary was left in the care of his older brother. After he graduated from high school, Gary was told by his brother to get himself a job. One morning the teenager woke up to find his brother gone. With the help of a neighbor, he managed to find foster parents but as the families he ended up with were for-

eigners, the arrangements were short-term. Eventually he found himself living on the street, having been rejected by his own relatives.

A policeman brought him to a center for street children run by Catholics. But because he is a Mormon, the administration feared he might be an unwelcome influence on the other residents. He finally decided to seek refuge at Pangrap Shelter where he is now undergoing counseling and therapy. "I am challenging myself to overcome the negative effects of the hardships I went through... I hope for a good future. I know I can change and am determined to do so."

For Mavic Prospero and the other adults, who traveled with the kids on their trip to Australia, chaperoning the youngsters involved more than just ensuring that their wards did not commit any major social gaffs. At times, the job seemed like being on a suicide watch. Prospero, program specialist of CYFP, remembered how Gary, sitting in an executive office in the top floor of a building, looked down from the glass window and very casually remarked: "Puedeng tumalon mula dito."

Eye-opener

While other young people would have been thrilled at the idea of traveling outside the country, the teenagers had reservations about being among foreigners, speaking an alien tongue

and, worse, recounting their ordeal to a group of strangers. CYFP coached them on how to conduct themselves during the conference, and helped prepare their "papers" for their presentation. But the prospect, intimidating enough for most people, could only have been terrifying for the youngsters whose self-worth had hit rock bottom.

As Jenny said, "Hindi naman ganon kadali na magkwento ng buhay. Natakot ako nang kaunti. Inisip ko na lang na dahil sa kwento ko magkakaroon sila (other kids) ng pag-asa." Initially uninterested in the trip, Jenny started to look forward to it as she and the others prepared for the conference. She began to think that perhaps her life could inspire others.

"Parang panaginip" was how Gary described the experience. The young man, who had always wanted to travel and who thought things were so much better outside, was jolted to find out that street children were not exactly exclusive to the Philippines. One of the participants in Sydney was an American kid. "He was homeless so I felt there was no difference [between us]. Kahit saan may problema sa pamilya." Gary also met an Australian teenage girl who left home, went into drugs and joined various gangs. "Malaki talaga ang problema sa kabataan."

He learned to appreciate the initiatives being taken by various agencies and institutions in the Philippines. "Kahit na mahirap na bansa ay gumagawa ng paraan para malutas ang problema."

The trip showed Jenny that she was not alone. "Dati may suicidal tendencies ako dahil sa problema. Naisip ko na ako lang ang may problemang ganon." In Sydney, she realized that it was not only in the Philippines where some children were made to suffer. "So, kailangan matalag ako at magpatuloy [sa buhay]."

Jenny decided she would share the stories she heard in Sydney with her peers back home. "Maraming mga bata na kahit provided for na ay hindi pa rin masaya. Sa Australia, halos iyang mga bata lang ang naghahanap ng solusyon sa problema."

Gary said Australia raised his self-esteem. "Mas tumaas ang pananaw ko sa sarili." Unabashedly, he said he could not help feeling he was luckier than his fellow wards because he

realized his dream to travel. But he said what happened to him should encourage others not to abandon their dreams. "May pag-asa kung mag-sisikap sila."

Jenny took care not to give the impression that she now considered herself above her peers after Sydney. "Maraming bata ang nagsasabi 'Mabuti pa ikaw ate' so sinasabi ko na hindi ako espesyal. Lahat may oportunidad. May pagkakataon din sila." Like Gary, she hoped that her experience would inspire others not to lose hope.

Jenny said by sharing their stories in Sydney, they were able to show that Filipinos had courage. "Hindi dapat ikahiya [ang nangyari sa buhay]." She said they showed their strength by surviving the ordeals that they had been through.

After Sydney, the young people have become even more committed to pursue their other dreams. Gary is determined to live abroad, one reason he is studying computers now before entering college where he would like to take up psychology.

Jenny wants to be a police officer, a journalist and an artist all at the same time and for the same reason. "Hindi ko pinagpipilian ang tatlo. Gusto ko sabay-sabay. Gusto kong makatulong at makaganti sa tulong na natanggap." As a police officer, she hopes to be able to help crime victims like her and as a journalist she wants to report on corruption "nang magising iyong mga corrupt na politicians." Through her artwork, she wants to show what is happening.

Gary noted that in the Philippines, many of the viable programs for troubled children were undertaken by private groups. "Sana magising ang gobyerno, maintindihan nito na unahin ang mga bata. The country will benefit by investing in children."

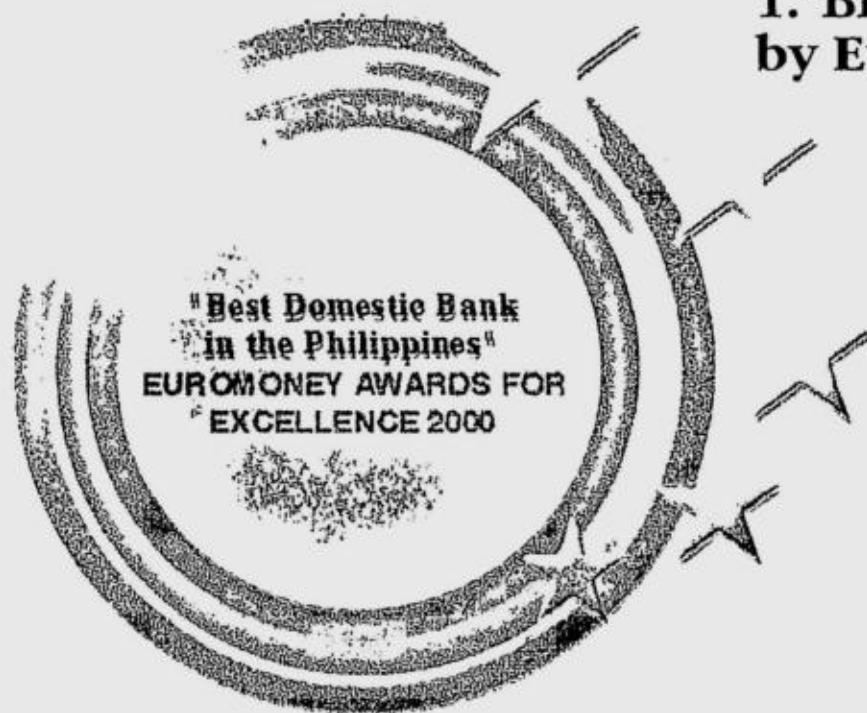
But Jenny liked the fact that Philippine institutions cooperate with parents and involve children.

The youngsters said it was difficult at first to communicate with the others in the conference but by the time they came home, they have made new friends with whom they promised to correspond via e-mail. "Basta kinausap nang kinausap at nagkaintindihan naman," Jenny said of how they managed to make friends.

TODAY

The house that values built has earned for itself a reputation as one of the country's respectable banks. It is now the third largest, in terms of resources and deposits. It has recently won global recognition when two prestigious international publications have conferred on it:

1. "BEST BANK" award by EuroMoney.



2. The "BANK OF THE YEAR 2000 in the Philippines" award by the London-based Financial Times.



The tradition of excellence and professionalism, work ethic and the unshakeable belief in the Filipino lives on at Equitable PCI Bank. Like our founding father before us, this is our vision. This is our commitment.

P

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Peace on Earth and to Men of Goodwill

BY JESS ARPERA



BY P. M. JUNIOR



BY EDGAR DIONELA



BY JOY CONIENDO



BY EUGENIA LAST

 **VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You will have to watch your cash today. Losses are likely. Children may be hard to deal with if you don't take the time to find the source of their problems.

TMSPuzzles@gmail.com

BY DANIEL SHELTON



BY PATRICK McDONNELL



BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER



BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



BY DOUG SHANNON



Giving thanks to God this millennium

By TELLY ALBERT ZULUETA

ALLOW me to welcome the new year by giving heartfelt thanks to Our Lord for His countless gifts—for my Catholic faith, for my education due to my parents' sacrifices, for comparatively good health on my 80th year, for whatever talents I may still have and for helping me continue writing here these last 13 years.

I thank the Lord that my second son Dicki was also able, like his sister Mati and brother Raffi before their deaths, to confess to a priest and receive the last sacraments before returning to the Father some months ago.

Also for all my relatives still alive, my daughter Carolinda (Lancaster), the sweetest of my children who unfortunately lives in the United States with her husband, and only son now Miguel, who supports me "in the life I was accustomed to" when my husband was alive and in whose beautiful St. Illian's Inn in Makati I stay whenever I am in town.

To my grandchildren, especially the sons of my eldest son Raffi, particularly Rafa-Bax, in whose beautiful home in Tagaytay I have been living in since the death of their father in 1977, who also gifted me with an air-conditioned car and a computer to work on when in Tagaytay. Also to Lucy Humbria, his efficient and kind secretary who used to be the secretary of his father before him.

True friend

Above all, for my good and true friend Nini Quezon Avancena since our kindergarten years—75 years ago, for always being there especially during all the "dark nights of my soul."

She showed her fidelity to God, country, family and friends, her courage and fortitude in the traumatic event of losing three of her most loved ones, mother Doña Aurora, sister Baby and first husband Philip Buencamino in an unexpected ambush by misguided communists when Nini was about to give birth to her second son.

For daring to bring Ferdinand Marcos to court on charges of libel when he publicly declared that Baby Quezon had been his "inamorata." Baby despised him and even insulted him whenever he came courting, "innocently" warning us all, in Ferdie's presence, to be careful when we brushed our teeth.

(For those who may have forgotten or for those too young to have heard of it, Marcos was once jailed—believe it or not—for the murder of his father's political foe, a certain Nalundasan, as he was brushing his teeth one night with his bathroom window open—in full view of his neighbors.)

But Nini was at her bravest when Marcos became a dictator and she painstakingly fought,

with a group of other valiant women, against the building of an atomic plant in Bataan. She was also responsible for getting a group to form the Concerned Women of the Philippines which was composed of such fearless patriots as Cecilia Muñoz-Palma, Paz Policarpio-Mendez, Teresa Feria-Nieva (who formed Namfrel with Jose Concepcion), Maring Yusay Feria, Teresita Daza Baltazar (inspired and inspiring conscience of Konsensiyang Pilipino), Angie Barrera-Catajoy (now CWP's Doña Aurora Aragon Quezon Peace Award chair together with Evelyn Lao Kilayko, Mary Concepcion Bautista and Bing Escoda Roxas, among others).

Instead of moping in her widowhood, she continued with her social work for the underprivileged and worked for the spiritual welfare of the poor joining the Assumption nuns in helping form the Farmers' Groups in San Simon, Pampanga.

Above all, I thank Nini for always being there during the "winter of my discontent"—my seven years of spiritual drought, getting me back to the Catholic fold, seeing me through my reincarnation and similar aberrations.

Our friendship has stood the test of time since our kindergarten years—that's 75 years ago today, despite its one-sidedness, Nini doing all the giving and me all the taking.

Once, Nini even accompanied me to what I expected to be a dreadful ordeal at Dr. Luis Orosa's clinic, not knowing that Dr. Luis and his *doktora* wife Lydia's specialty is painless root-canal work. They had been highly recommended because of their work these last 30 years.

Their two sons whom Lydia has proudly named after their father, Jose Luis I "Loloy" (now a phrododontist) and Jose Luis II "Louie" (cosmetic implants specialist) being "chips of the old block" are also full-fledged dentists who got their degrees in New York University's College of Dentistry and now work in the same Orosa Clinic as their parents.

Seeing Dr. Luis proudly showing his phrododontist son Loloy something he was able to achieve (like getting the same color of the tooth being inserted as the broken tooth), I truly believe that this family that treats teeth together will stay together.

Q&A #4

Why should I have my Discount Plus card swiped each time I make a purchase in a participating establishment?

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Cancer symposium gathers world's medical experts

ST. Luke's Medical Center, in its commitment to provide the health-care industry with medical education from renowned experts, sponsors the first Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and St. Luke's Medical Center's Cancer Institute symposium dubbed "Multidisciplinary Approach to Cancer," on Jan. 15-16, at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong City.

The symposium is in line with the 12th anniversary of SLMC's Cancer Institute and is part of the medical center's continuing lecture series with the world's best medical and health-care institutions.

Invited experts from the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center are Dr. Thomas J. Fahey, director of International Oncology Programs; Dr. Steven Larson, chief of Nuclear Medicine Service; Dr. Robert Kurtz, chief of Gastroenterology and Nutrition Service; Dr. Beryl McCormick, radiation oncologist; Dr. Ashok R. Shaha, surgeon of Head and Neck Service; and Dr. Anna P. Bondoc, fellow of Pulmonary Medicine Service. The speakers will discuss various aspects of thyroid cancer, parotid tumors, head and neck cancer, lung cancer, breast cancer, PET scanning, nuclear medicine, gastrointestinal cancer, retinoblastoma, among others.

Participants registering on or before Jan. 5 will be given a 25-percent discount off the registration fee. Medical students, medical residents, medical fellows, nursing students and other paramedical trainees are eligible for a 20 percent discount upon presentation of a letter of status of ongoing training from their program director or work ID. Call 727-5456, 723-0301 local 5456/4219 or e-mail correlations@stluke.com.ph.



A SHOE LIKE NO OTHER

Long known for being the shoe brand of punks and skinheads, Dr. Martens is shifting gear and training its sights on the young executive who wants to stand out in a crowd. If you still have money to spare from your Christmas bonus, buy a pair of Dr. Martens Urban Line shoes. It is a more refined line of shoes that caters to the metropolitan lifestyle. Dr. Martens is available at its outlets in Alabang Town Center and Glorietta 2.

Tikman ang Bagong Sarap ng

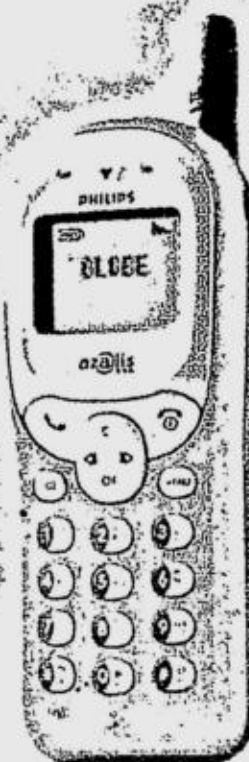
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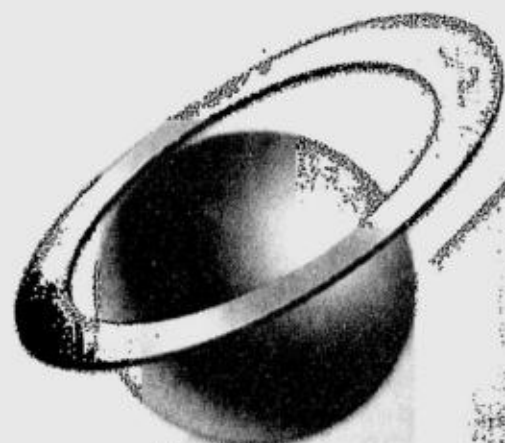
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LIFESTYLE

Harvest of seafood and flowers

Story on page D4

**SMART
Money**

I just received my first paycheck and all the stores are calling my name. I'm so excited I forgot to reload my celfone, not to mention my wallet, too. But no more jam-packed ATMs for me. I've finally figured out a better way to shop.

***"With SMART Money,
I can reload my
SMART celfone
and shop all I want
even without cash."***

Now I can walk into any store without cash and still buy what I want. All I need is my SMART Money and my SMART celfone. From the convenience of my celfone, I just load my SMART Money Card through SMART Mobile Banking or, at any SMART Money loading center—and I'm ready! Aside from loading call and text credits to my SMART Buddy, I can also use it to make purchases in stores that don't normally accept credit cards like tiangges, fastfood chains and beauty shops. Not to mention all MasterCard Electronic establishments nationwide.



Load it up. Live it up.

**All I need to know
about my**

**SMART
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because I want a cash card that lets me reload my celfone and shop from anywhere, hassle-free!

With SMART Money, you can conveniently reload your SMART Buddy celfone airtime & text credits & even shop for whatever you want with just a few clicks on your celfone.

because I don't want to stand in line for cash.

No ATMs needed. Your money comes to you. Using your celfone, you can transfer cash from your mobile bank account right into your SMART Money.

because I need total security.

Your actual cash is secured by the SMART Money system that complies with MasterCard standards. You might lose your card, but never your money.

because I control my spending.

Know exactly where your money goes. With SMART Money and your celfone, you can monitor your card balance and track your purchases.

because I want to shop anywhere.

Use your SMART Money in places that don't accept credit cards and in all MasterCard Electronic establishments nationwide.

because I want to have fun.

Now, you can shop in bazaars, play in arcades & watch your favorite movies with SMART Money!



**how do I get my
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Both the SMART Money SIM and cash card come free with the purchase of a new SMART celfone kit.

If you're already a SMART GSM subscriber, you can check if your SIM card supports SMART Money.

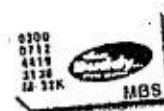
Just look for this MBS marking at the back of the SIM:

If you already have an MBS SIM, simply fill out the SMART Money info sheet at any SMART Telecenter and get your SMART Money Card for FREE.

For all other GSM subscribers, you can get the SMART Money Card free when you upgrade to a SMART MBS SIM Card for only P990. Simply look for this package at any authorized SMART dealer:

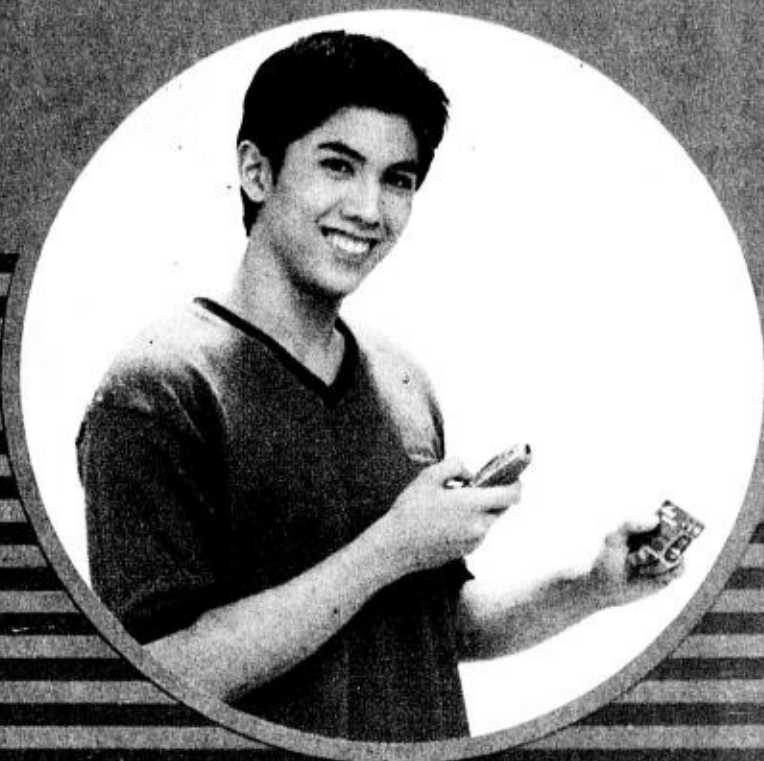
SMART Money works with a phase 2 plus celfone. To find out whether your handset is a phase 2 plus celfone, just call SMART Money Hotline at 845-7777, visit any SMART Telecenter or click the SMART website at www.smart.com.ph.

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SMART Money



how do I use my SMART Money?

TO ENJOY YOUR SMART MONEY FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE STEPS:

How do I activate my cash card?

- step 1**
Go to SMART MENU and select SMART MONEY.
- step 2**
Key in your 12-digit MCOM number found on your SMART Money card and press OK.
- step 3**
Key in your default W-PIN (123456) and press OK.
- step 4**
You will receive a confirmation message and be advised to change your W-PIN to protect your SMART Money.

How do I load cash into my SMART Money?

To reload over the counter:

- step 1**
You can put any amount in your SMART Money card through SMART Money Loading Centers.
- step 2**
Upon receiving cash, the cashier swipes your card and gives you a transaction record.
- step 3**
Now your SMART Money is loaded and you're ready to go! For maximum reloading convenience, use your celfone to load cash in your SMART Money card straight from your Mobile Bank Account.

How do I load airtime and text credits on my SMART Buddy celfone?

- step 1**
Go to the SMART MENU and select SMART BUDDY.
- step 2**
Select RELOAD and press OK.
- step 3**
If you want to reload your own SMART Buddy celfone, select MY BUDDY and press OK. If you want to reload another celfone, select OTHERS, key in the recipient's SMART Buddy celfone number and press OK.
- step 4**
Key in your W-PIN and press OK.
- step 5**
You and the recipient will receive a text message confirming the amount successfully loaded.

how do I make a purchase?

Your card must be activated and loaded with cash value before it can be used to purchase goods and services. Simply present your SMART Money to the cashier. The cashier swipes your SMART Money and you'll receive a sales slip. Sign it, and you're off!

For deliveries, simply call the store, place your orders and give your MCOM number. You'll then receive a text message to confirm your purchase. Authorize your transaction with your W-PIN and you're done!



Mobile Banking + SMART Money. The future of payment.

Enjoy the full convenience of SMART Money with SMART's Mobile Banking service. When your SMART Money card is supported by SMART Mobile Banking, you can load cash value into your SMART Money—right from your celfone! It's like having your own personal ATM—anytime, anywhere!

how do I load SMART Money thru SMART Mobile Banking?

You have to be a registered Mobile Banking depositor of any of the member banks in the SMART Mobile Banking Service.

1. Using a SMART GSM celfone, go to SMART Menu and select SMART Money.
2. Click Reload.
3. Choose an amount.
4. Key-in the M-PIN code of your Mobile Bank account.
5. You will receive a text confirmation and you're done!

The SMART Mobile Banking Service members are: 1st e-Bank, Dao Heng Bank, East West Bank, Equitable-PCI Bank, Export & Industry Bank, Global Bank, International Exchange Bank, Metrobank, Planters Development Bank, Premiere Development Bank and Union Bank.

Ask your bank about Mobile Banking for SMART Money reloading now!

Get the most out of your SMART Money SIM card!

With your own SMART Money SIM card, you will have a top-up option with your new SMART Money SIM card. You can also use it to top-up your celfone anytime, anywhere!

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Personalize your SMART Money card. You can join the Rewards Program, Redeem it, and exchange it for prepaid airtime, text credits, and more!

Grab your SMART Money now!

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SMART Money



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Load it up. Live it up.



SEMI-TERETE vanda orchids



IHAW-IHAW at the plaza during seafood festival



PREPARING fish catch for bidding

Harvest of seafood and flowers

BY TITA V. GIRON
PHOTOS BY LYN RILLON

FOR THE OFFICIAL opening on Dec. 4 of the five-day agri-aqua harvest festival in Roxas City, Capiz, we were invited to go seafood tripping al fresco all through the night. This was not totally unexpected since Roxas City is the seafood capital of the country, the best place to get *alimusan* cooked to perfection in coconut milk and ginger, fried breaded scallops, steamed crabs, succulent oysters in shell and prawns.

First stop was Marc's Sutukil (*sugba, tuwa* and *kilawin*), a takeoff from Cebu's famous *ihaw-ihaw* market. The word *tuwa* is synonymous to *tinola*, the Visayan version.

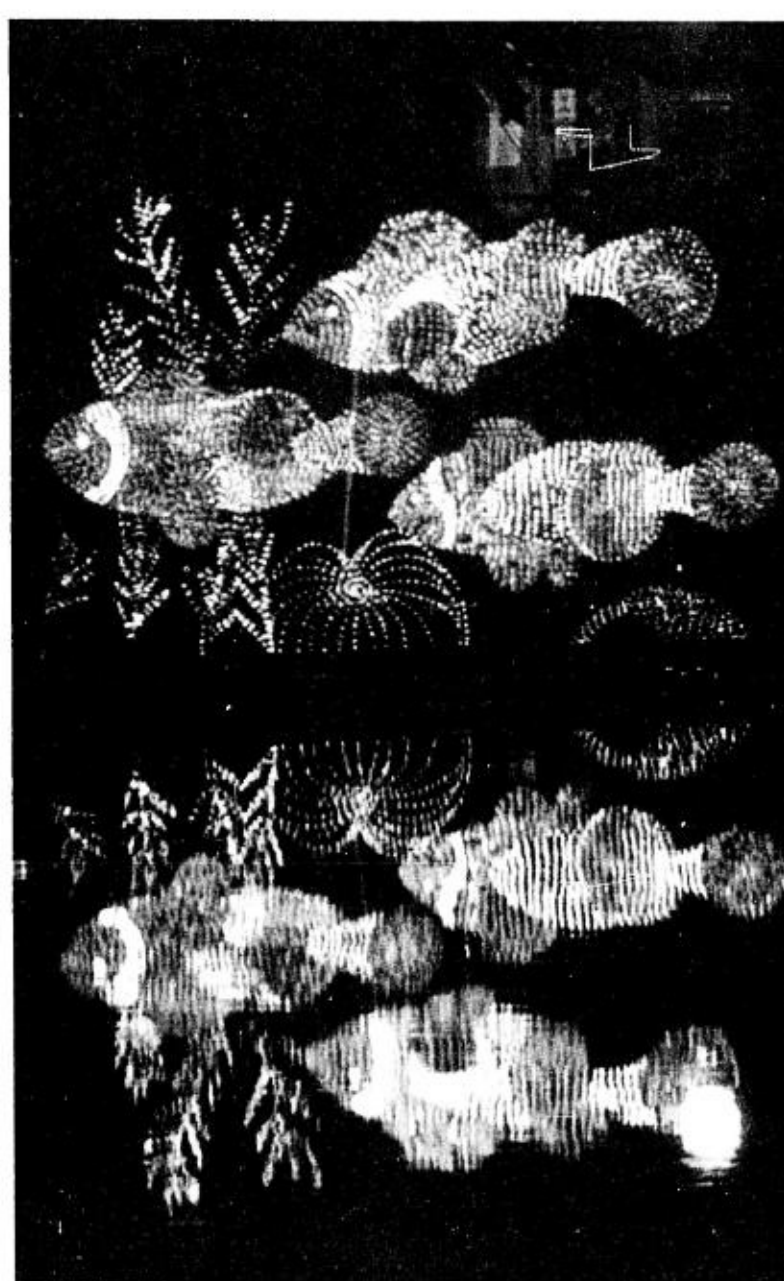
We dined on freshly caught *pampano* that was grilled to perfection and served with *tinola kikilo* and *lumpiang ubod hubad*. As we discovered, the Capizeño version of *tinola* is what *pangat* is to Tagalog folks. Instead of the expected fish stewed in ginger, papaya and chili leaves, we discovered this slightly soured fish soup with tomatoes and *batuan*, a native fruit. *Kikilo* fish looks and tastes like the expensive *kitang*.

Marc's Sutukil is the newest addition to the growing cluster of nighttime *ihaw-ihaw* eateries along Baybay beach. That night, the sky was clear and the crescent moon was ringed by a perfect halo—a phenomenal sight to us Manila folk. PDI photographer Lyn Rillon was mesmerized. "I remember that rare night in Laoag where the sun danced earlier and the moon wore a halo at night," she reminisced between bites of grilled *pampano*.

We left Marc's for the town plaza where we had an extended nightcap long after the river floats were formally lighted by town officials. Amid the ear-splitting sound of the rock band, we inched our way through barbecue stands where charcoal-fired grills emitted thick smoke and tempting aroma of fish. Just for the night, the local chefs must have barbecued tons of *pantat* (*hito*), *kitang*, *pampano*, *abu*, clams, giant squids and *tanguige*.

Abundance

It was a fitting nightcap to the hectic first day of the Capiz harvest festival. For very good reasons, the Capizeños went overboard with



LIGHTED float on Roxas City river

preparations this year. According to them, their rice and fish harvests are abundant.

"We have an excess of 185.9 percent of rice harvest this year," Gov. Vic Bermejo announced at an earlier press conference.

There is also an increase in fisheries harvest. According to provincial agriculturist Cris Billanes Jr., this year's total fisheries production is 45,437 metric tons compared to 44,614 MT in 1999.

"We're not only exporting live fish and shellfish. We also have processed seafood products. They are available for Christmas," Billanes

cited bottled *bangus* sardine, spiced crispy *dilis* in vegetable oil, vacuum-fried mussels, dried fish and *bangus daeng*.

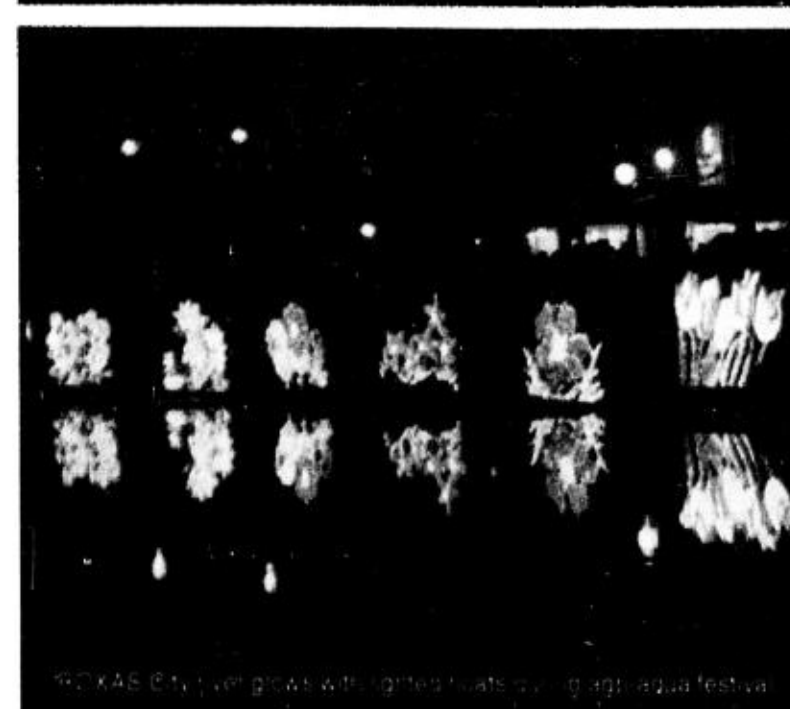
"These are ideal gifts for *balikbayans* also," he added. (For more information, write to Edna Viterbo, acting chair of the Capiz Multi-Purpose Cooperative, at RCPDC, McKinley Street, Roxas City.)

The governor also raved about favorable developments in the horticulture business, which is now considered "a sunshine industry" in the region. This was evident at the big crowd of buyers at the plant market, one of the sidebar events during the recent agri-aqua festival.

"A few years ago, we were buying plants and flowers from Iloilo. Now we supply the entire Iloilo, Capiz and Aklan. Moreover, we are preparing to export foliage plants to China and Japan," disclosed Viterbo, who was recently elected president of the Federation of Cutflower and Ornamental Plant Growers of the Philippines.

Now recognized as potential revenue generators for the province, the plant growers are recognized as members of the Capiz Multi-Purpose Cooperative, a conglomeration of fishpond owners, seafood processors and commercial fishery establishments. As members, they are now marketing their plants at the coop center in the town plaza.

Blessed with unpolluted water and air from the mountains and the sea, the Roxas City garden people certainly have an edge over other plant growers in the country. (For inquiries, write to Viterbo or Lily Ong at the multipurpose cooperative. Ong has the biggest plant farms in the region.)



ROXAS City river glows with lighted floats during agri-aqua festival